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Miller, Ellen Spaulding, 1843-  
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## THE LETTERS OF ELLEN SPAULDING MILLER

May 7th 1870  
Three Rivers Mich.

Dear Parents,

I sit down to write a few lines to let you know where we are. We stopped at Corry, waited for the night Express, bought our tickets for LaCrosse and got to White Pigeon about three oclock Thursday in the afternoon, took the carrs for Three Rivers, found a man here that was agoing passe Grandfather's, and we got a chance to ride to the door. All safe without any accident. Found the folks all well as usual. John Huff, Adella's husband, has gone to Kansas to look land, expect him back to night. I think it is just as nice a country around Grandfather's as any one could ask for. Apple, Peach, Cherry, and Pear trees are all in blossom. Winter Wheat in some places is a foot high. We did not intend to stop here, but there had been a wreck at Cleveland, and an extra train came down to meet us. We had to walk as far as ten rods past the wreck, and hurry so this extra train would be on time to meet the Express. They didn't have time to put the baggage a board. Our bag was checked to Chicago. We knew we should have to wait there for it so we concluded to stop here. We shall start Monday morning for Chicago. I can't write any more now but will write again when we get to Eau Claire.

Grandfather and mother requested me to tell Father and Mother to come up here and eat Peaches this fall. Good Bye for this time.

Ellen

They commenced planting corn here a week ago.

Eau Claire, May 16th (1870)

Dear Father, Mother and Sisters.

We arrived at our journey's end last Thursday, all well, found them all well here, and doing a great deal better than I expected they were. Charles has a nice house in town, furnished well. To day he is having his house raised and a stone wall put under it. We went up to Almons yesterday. He looks older than I expected to see. He works hard, has got a nice farm, good house and barn upon it. I think we shall be contented here. The country here don't look much as I thought it would around Eau Claire. It is hilly, looks a little like Catturangus. I had no idea there was so much business done here. In just one mill where Charles is at work they saw one hundred thousand feet a day. It keeps Charles pretty busy. He don't get any time to rest except Sunday. I don't believe there ever was a man thought any more of than Charles is. Every body speaks of him as a smart thorough business man. He owns another house close by here that he rents. And there is a family in it now, but he said he would let us have it to live in, and have Jeff

measure lumber for him, until he could build a house upon his farm. I guess we shall buy it, but it is to late in the Spring to do any thing about farming. Some fields of corn is up large enough to hoe, and potatoes look nice.

I think Wesley has got the best woman. That is, I like her the best. Perhaps I shall like Almon's wife better the more I get acquainted with her. She bosses Almon around to much to suit my fancy. Almon is just as full of fun as ever. He knew us both just as soon as he saw us. He wonders if Mother remembers how he used to steal her mince pies out of the old milk house.

I am glad we came up here for I think we shall have us a nice home in a few years. Jeff has got some ambition to work now. The river is close by. You can stand in the door and see the steamboats pass by. We came from Lacrosse to Eau Claire on the boat. It cost us nineteen and a half dollars, from there up to Eau Claire. We paid fifty-two dollars for our tickets in Corry to Lacrosse. We could not get them any cheaper there than in Randolph.

My house plants were pretty well smashed up when I got here. I have set them out and they begin to revive some. I have not seen any flowers as nice as mother's since I left home. Almon's wife has a large flower garden, but no house plants. I have written on a hen gallop ever since I commenced from one thing to another. And my paper is almost full, and I

can't write half that I want to. Mary made me a present of a nice hat with a green veil and breastpin and earrings. They are handsome to. Mary has got dresses that cost over fifty dollars and plenty of them to. I must stop writing, for this time. Write soon and let me know how you are. Ida requested me to give her love to Addie.

Ellen

Eau Claire, June 1870

Dear Sister,

I thought I would sit down and write a few lines to let you know that we are all well. We are staying at Charley's. Jeff is at work in the mill. I think we shall go to house keeping next week. Charles is a going to build a house upon his farm and break up thirty acres and put on a team and two or three cows, and then gives us all we can make the first year. He would not give everybody that chance. Mary and I went up to Almon yesterday after strawberys. Drove our own horse, picked a small tin pan full, and got back home in time for dinner, gone about two hours, and we caught such a cold we can hardly speak aloud to day. Such nice weather we are having. It has not rained but twice or three times since I came here, very light showers. The potatoe bug has made its appearance here again this season. People think the crop will be a failure throughout the country. Almon has two acre planted.

They hunt the bugs and pick them off. They are a great large bug. They are larger than those beans Mother raises. I wish you would tell Father to see Uncle John Miller and see if he has sold that note I left there. I wrote to him when we first got here to sell the note and send me the money but have got no answer. We need the money very bad to get our furniture with. Now I wish Father would see him, and get the note and dispose of it and send the money as soon as possible. I want you to write to me if it isn't but three lines to let me know you are all well. How does Mother's flower garden flourish. There is lots of wild flowers in blossom upon the prairies. The sundial grows wild here all over the bluffs and prairie. I must close for want of room. This half sheet is all the paper in the house to night. I want you to write as soon as you get this.

Ellen

Eau Claire, July 7th 1870

Dear Sister,

I see that I have got to do all the writing, so here I go. We are all well to begin with. I have been cleaning house to day. The family that just moved out, left the dirtiest house I ever saw. For the last two months we have had the dryest and hottest weather that was ever known here. I was up to Almon's last week and I took my shoes and stockings off. Al wanted me

to go out in the garden to see how he had got rid of the potato bugs. I took two or three steps in the hot sand and almost blistered my feet. It is a very sandy soil here. The roads look like sand beds. We had nice showers here yesterday and to day it is raining. Jeff has worked in the mill every day since we got here. Jeff can buy 80 eighty acres of land, joining Charley's, for four hundred dollars. But land is raising all the time and I am afraid by the time we can get it, it will be sold. If we had the money on that note here now we could make one payment then we would be all right. He can get time on the rest. Ask Father if he will get that note of Uncle John and take it to A.G. Dow and get the money on it. If he can send it to me soon as you get this, we can pay that for the land, and in the Spring, Charley will let us have lumber to build a house with. I think we are a going to get along all right. Almon has 13 acres of wheat, 7 acres of oats, 6 acres of corn,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres of potatoes, and his crops look nice for all we have had such dry weather. He has got two acres of Norway oats. I never saw any as nice as they are. Almon says he is agoing to send Father two barrels of flour this fall but I guess his calculations will fail. Tell Mother not to get a very great supply of flour on hand but then I don't think there is any danger. Almon thinks he has got a pretty smart woman. I am glad he thinks so, but she ain't my style. I have got five two-quart cans of strawberrys and four of blue berrys.

I picked them my self. I wish you would write to me. Tell me if Mother had lots of strawberrys on her vines, and if she has plenty of currents and how her flower garden flourishes, and all the

[one line illegible]

shant write again until I hear from you. Send your letters in care of Charley. This is all for this time.

From Ellen

Birdie you can write to me can't you. The next time I will write to you. They held a large celebration in West Eau Claire the Fourth. Good Bye.

Eau Claire, Aug 23rd [1870]

Dear Sister,

As I am alone to night I thought I would write and let you know that we are all well at present. We got your letter about two weeks ago, was very glad to hear from home. One week ago last Thursday the cars came into Eau Claire for the first time, and it was a great day of rejoicing, you had better believe. I made all preparations to go but Carrie was taken sick, so I staid at home and got up a nice dinner and invited Charles and his wife, Almon and wife to dinner. We had a good time. They went up town at ten oclock to see the cars come in, came back to my house, took dinner, and then went to hear the speaches. I will send you a paper containing the particulars



of the celebration.

Almon was here yesterday. He had been up town selling vegetables. He has sold over sixty dollars worth of potatoes, melons, and has loads of them left. There is a great market here for country produce. There is not much farming done here, and a man that has a large garden can get rich selling vegetables. Any thing and every thing you raise you can find a good market for it. We have had lots of ripe apples and peaches here, that were brought up the river. I have not seen an apple tree since I came here, only Siberian Crab, they grow here abundantly. Jeff is driving team for the Eau Claire Lumber Company, has not lost a day, since we came here. We hear a great many stories about the family that Almon married into. Every body that I get acquainted with has something to say about the Gortons, and I can see for myself that they are a miserable set, tight and stingy. They quarrel among themselves. You know that Almon's wife wrote down to Father that Charles failed on his payments when they were in the mill together. That was no such thing. Charles loaned a thousand dollars and paid down for his share in the mill, and got a clear deed. And he did not want anything to do with it in the first place. He see that Almon was like to lose what he had in the mill and he done it to accommodate Almon. The old mill don't amount to any thing, and Charles told him so. There ain't a smarter business man in this town than Charles

Spaulding. He has worked for the Eau Claire Lumber Company eight year and has never lost a day. He does their business just as he would for him self. Some times they are gone for months, and he sees that everything is done up right. If he has a chance to make a good bargain when they are away he improves it, and it is all right with them. They could not find another man that would fill his place.

[Scrawled in between Ellen's lines:

Unless its me. Jeff.]

Charles pays taxes on thirty-five hundred dollars. Sunday Aug 28 I received your letter Friday, was very glad to hear from you. I commenced this letter the day that yours was mailed, but have not had time to finish it until to day. Almon was here yesterday. He came down with his oxen, traded them for a span of horses, and drove them home at night. I am glad Mother is agoing to Mich. She will see some nice country there. I think I had rather live there than here. Charles said if Father was agoing too, that he and Mary would meet them at Grandfathers. Write and tell me if they go. Did you get my table up there. I gave that to Mother and my wash board I left there to Affs I will give that to you. Tell Aff if he can send the whole of the money. Just as well now as any time we would like it. We can get us a nice farm now. Tell Father to take the money and get a draft sent to us, as soon as you get this. Charles bought a horse a few days ago to

match the one he had. Yesterday sold the span for three hundred seventy five dollars. Tell Mother that the most of my plants died. I have got the Scarlet Lily, two of those red plants, the maderia vine and those little lily bulbs and the Dahlias, is all I saved. They was all right when I got here but I went up to Almon, and staid two weeks, and Charley's folks let them all dry up. I have got some new plants that I never saw there, the musk plant and wax plant are two of them. I have not seen any nice flower gardens here yet. You say you have to do all of the writing. I think not by the looks of this. You ought to write every week. You don't have anything else to do. No more this time. I will send Birdie some pieces of my dresses. The white is Mira's dress.

Ellen

[In the margins:]

Susie and Mira were so pleased with their paper that they both hopped up and down. She send Birdie one. The baby tore Mira's into just now but I will send it just the same.

I wrote to Asa a long time before I got your first letter, had no answer yet. They won't hear from us again, not by my writing to them. I think Asa has played smart to marry into that tribe. This card is for Birdie.

Tuesday, Eau Claire, Feb 21st [1871]

Dear Sisters,

Today finds us all well and enjoying the best of health. Jeff is still driving team as usual. We have nice sleighing here, about six inches of snow and I have not seen a bare spot of ground this winter. To day it is a nice warm spring day, to pleasant to stay indoor. Almon and Mary made me a visit yesterday, said they had just written to Father and sent his picture. Al just got a letter from George Chillson. He has a baby girl almost a year old. He owns an interest in a hardware store in Chicago but he is not in the store him self.

Aunt Lorrinda lives in Galesburg in a nice house that Uncle Chilson bought before he was killed. Francis Roe lives with her. George wanted to know where Al Bannister was, said he left there last Spring, and has not heard a word from him since.

I suppose you and Birdie are a going to school. I don't see why you can't write to me as often as once a month. You never said how you liked your presents or whether you liked them at all. You must set down and write Charley wife a good long flattering letter and thank her for her present she made you. She is looking for a letter from Mother, and you know Mother is all out of practice so you must do the writing. I don't think we shall move this Spring. I don't think it would pay to go upon Charleys place where there is only six acres broke. We could not raise enough to live upon, and pay our

way along as we go, and then I don't think Charley will build a house there. He has got a kind of sell out (on the brain) to go to Iowa or Missouri. I guess it won't amount to much. Mary said Charles is selling with the Company and will not stay another year, unless they raise his pay to fifteen hundred a year. We can do well to stay here in town until we can get some breaking done upon our own place. We received a letter from Asa yesterday, said his mother was very sick.

Tell Father that most all of the steamboats that run up and down this river last Summer have been burned this winter. One burnt at the landing here in Eau Claire and three or four others at different landings below here. All set a fire, without doubt, by some roughe. The one here burnt down about four oclock one Sunday morning. The watchman, the only man upon it, was awakened by his dog, just in time to save his life. Tell Bertha that Eliza Connel, Charley's hired girl, is there yet and is a going to send her picture to her in a letter. So Birdie you must answer it when she does. I must close for want of room. My love to all.

Ellen Miller

I have written in a terrible hurry and I guess you will think so when you get it, Addie and Birdie.

Eau Claire, May 27th

Dear Sister Birdie,

I received your letter some time ago, and have been waiting to hear from Addie before I answered it. And I have made up my mind to wait until next fall before I get a letter from her, but tell her she will get another manuscript before long if she don't write soon and send me that picture.

We are all well now. Mira has been having quite a bad time again with her face and hands. She got poisoned again just as she did last summer. She and Carrie went up to the Beer Garden and wandered all through the shrubbery. They have lots of flowers there and the wind blew awful hard that day. Doctor Farr said the wind blew the dust from some poison plants or vines on her face and hands. I think it must have been poison ivy. Her face was worse than her hands. Her eyes were swollen shut. Last summer she picked ivy and her hands were worse than her face.

We have not seen All's folks up here yet. I have not heard why they did not come. Charley's folks are all well. Mary was here Saturday. She has been having quite a bad time with her teeth and face. Ida has been over sewing for herself on my machine. Their machine got out of repair.

Tell Mother I have got some fuchia in blossom, and a spotted maple, and quite a number of others. Every one that comes here think my plants are lovely. They are not very large. I suppose they would look ashamed by the side of Mother's large plants. I want to send Mother some plants. If I could send her

something she had not got, I would like it. You have got so many since I came away that I don't know what to send.

I wish you to ask Mother if she has set out all of her gladiolous and tube roses, and if she can share me some. I wish she would send me a monthly rose and hydrangia, rooted if she can. If you can send me some right away, write and tell me. If you do, send me some slips of all of your plants that you can, every thing. I don't care how many. I don't want you to pay the charges for we can do that. Do me up some flower seeds and send them to. There now, can't I beg something else to. I have not planted any seed yet. The painters have been here for the last two week painting the house and fences, but they are done now, and I can work out door.

Ask Mother if she ever see a monthly white rose. I have just got a slip of one and I think it is agrowing. If she has not got one, I will send her one. I think I can get a spotted Callia Lily. The leaves are covered with light spots. They are handsome I tell you.

Jeff has been driving team for two or three weeks hauling the Co's freight from the Depot. I suppose you know that Mrs. Vinton is in Randolph by this time. Her parents are both sick, and they sent for her. She said she would go and see you. Well I thought I would not write but a few lines, but I have my sheet full and have not been over five minutes writing it. We went up to Den's yesterday and had all the fresh fish we

could eat. Den went a fishing in the morning and caught five monstrous fish out of the river. Tell Mother we had some ripe strawberries here the 17th of this month. They were delicious. They came from the South. But I must stop writing for this time. Write as soon as you get this. Tell Mother to write.

[Written in the margins:]

My love to all. Many thanks for your picture.

I will send you a piece of Ida's dress and for trimming. I forgot when I sent Addie's letter. There I just gave a beggar seven cents, want that libral now. All the change I had except Co script. I don't suppose you know what kind of money that is, but I do.

If you have some bulbs and plants to send me, send them right away, just as soon as you can, and oblige.

Ellen

Note: This letter begins with news written by Almon Spaulding and his wife, Mary E. Spaulding ("Lizzie"). Ellen's words are at the end.

Eau Claire, July 16/71

Dear Sister,

After so long delay I will try and answer your very welcome letter. I know I have sadly neglected you by not writing before but you must forgive me and I will do better in future. Those seeds and bulbs came all right and doing nicely.



I would not take money for them.

The summer has been very warm and dry. The spring wheat will be almost a failure. Corn never looked better. And other crops look midling well.

Ellen and Jeff and children are with us to day. I brought her home with me friday night. She is going to stay until tomorrow night (Monday). We have talked a blue streak ever since she came. We are not going to let her ever go back only to visit so if you want to live by her you will have to get married and come out here and live to. Jeff says tell father my place is worth a \$1000. He has got a nice place. Land is coming up all the time. Father would not know Eau Claire in two years they would have had two large fires this summer and they are now obliged to build with brick which will make the place make quite a city appearance. But I must stop to get dinner and El is going to write some too. Oh I must tell you little Carrie is just as cunning as she can be. She talks plain as any one and is as good as a kitten. Now write soon and tell Birdie to write too. Give our love to all inquiring friends, especially Father and Mother. And write how mother's health is. Tell her I think of her every time I look at my flowers, and hope she takes as much comfort with hers as I do with mine. But I will say good bye until some future time when I will write you a longer and better letter.

Mary E. Spaulding

Dear Father,

As I don't feel like writing in this letter where it is full of trash, but as Ellen has waked me up, I will say that I have got to be a miller again, have got a man living with Mary. They are getting along fine. I had to come home 2 days this week and cradle my winter wheat. It will go 25 bu per acre. Spring wheat is going to be light, not more than a half a crop. My norway oats are very nice. Corn never looked better at this time of the year. Potatoes are nice. The bugs have not done me any damage this year.

A W Spaulding

Well: Addie. I must fill this sheet. Of course, we are having a nice visit out in the country. Went a blueberrying yesterday, picked ten quarts. I suppose you have lots of berrys, enough to pick close by the house, without going away after them. I think it is about time you answered my letter. Tell Father that Charles received his letter, for I don't suppose he has answered it yet. So good bye for the present.

Ellen

My love to Father, Mother and Birdie,

Ellen

Eau Claire, March 17, 1872

Dear Father and Mother,

We received your letter yesterday. It was advertised.

We got Birdie's two days before. It was not put in our box. We are well and enjoying ourselves as usual. We were surprised to hear that Asa had left home. We have not seen him out here. What was the cause of his leaving in the way that he did. Write and let us know. Jeff has sold his place for \$890 eight hundred and ninety dollars. He gets half down and the balance in six months. The object we had in selling was to get a better start. We did not have the means to go upon the place this spring independently. Now we can buy another place, pay a little down, and have the rest to work with. He can buy that Irish man's land near there by paying three hundred dollars down. He will give time to pay the rest. If he buys it and Aff should sell and come out here, he can have it if he wants it. I think by the reading of your letter that you have been informed that Jeff is not doing any thing. The day that Jeff and the man went to look at the place, Charles sent another man to drive his team. And after that Charles never told him a thing to do, of any kind. But Jeff kept right on to work at any thing he could find to do, and then Charles found fault with him, and said he was not doing anything. Tommy Gilberts came to him and said he heard he was not doing much. Jeff told him if that was the case he had better quit. Jeff hired out the next day to drive a dray that hauls freight from the depot. He hauls all of the Company's freight. So what does Charles do but go to this man and tell him that if he kept Jeff he could

not haul their freight. The man told him that it would not spite Jeff any.

Charles holds a grudge against Jeff because Mary and I had some trouble last summer. They called me a liar and Jeff took my part, and did not side with Mary. He was mad about it and told us to leave the house. That was about six week before I was sick last fall. We had not been in each other's house, nor did not speak, that is Mary and I, and when I was taken sick Mary came down here. And I told her to leave this house. I did not want any thing to do with her. Charles came down and wanted me have Mary come. I told him I did not want her when I was sick. Two weeks she came again. I suppose they thought I was agoing to die. Ever since then she has been as good as pie to my face.

A few days ago Charles told us to leave the house the first of April. I never intended to write one word home about our fuss but I am not agoing to hid their faults any longer. I think if Mary and her children would tell the truth once in a while we would get along all right. Ever since the first summer we lived here they have been trying to find some fault to get us out of here and I think Mary is at the bottom of it all. We heard a great many things they said about us by the way of Eliza because she thought that they were to blame. She left there last Spring but was there to work a few weeks last fall. I don't worry one bit. We have good living and plenty

of friends. And there is one thing about it. We have just as good a right in this country as they have and we intend to stay here to, and I don't think it will be much years before we shall be as rich as All is. And I guess that is what plagues them, for fear we will get something ahead. You may think by the reading of this letter that I have over done my self, but it is nothing but the truth. I think I have written enough for this time. I will close by saying good bye. Write soon.

To Father and Mother

From Your Daughter Ellen

I am very glad to hear that you are able to get about with help. When you get able to help your self you had better come and make us a long visit to pass away time. I should not think Livonia boy would be such a rarity. They have got so many boys. For my part, I just as soon have girls. I believe they think more of their parents when they get grown up than boys do.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Apr 4th

Sister Aadie,

We received your and Bertha's letters to day and hasten to \_\_\_\_\_ the same. We are a going to write as often as you do if it is every day.

I hear by the way of Ida that Ada thinks lots of Jeff but

the rest of them talk as if I was not of any account. I feel awful bad. Of course I believe all I hear. Now Adie to tell the truth Ida should be pittied more than blamed for she has been taught to lie from infancy. Ida is not any worse to lie than her Mother or Mrs. Cass or any of the tribe. It is my private opinion that Liza is no better than Mary. I will tell you one little thing. The time that Ellen was so sick and they all had given her up but me and the Dr., All and Liza came down and as soon as they got in the house, Al says do you want to sell your farm. I told him that I did not know or something like that. He says I will give you \$100. For your chance. I says to him do you think I am a fool. All says you may need themoney before you get through with this. Then they wanted to know how Ellen is this morning. More than that he tride to buy it out from under me not more than two or three weeks after your Father left here. And then he was man enough to try to get this farm that I now have as soon as he found out that I was a goin to buy it. I was never talked to any worse than Lizzie has talked to me about Ellen and my self. She is smart in her way. All is no more than a hired man. He has to do just as she says. I have heard her say that All would not ever been worth a cent if he had his own way. Why I say any thing about their trying to buy the land is this. The time that your Father and Mother were here All told them that he would not see Ellen suffer or something like that, and this is

the way that he uses us. He is talking around now that I will lose my place yet. The very reason of Ellen being so sick or getting so low before being sick was trouble, she had enough of it. I think I could write here all night such trash and then just get into the subject. We don't have any trouble with any of them now for if they quarrel with us, they have to come where we are and do it all them selves. When Ellen hears any thing she will laugh instead of cry as she use to. I know that All or Liza wrote to your Father that I was very shiftless. I presume you never have seen the letter. I don't say this to pick you or find out any thing for I know all that I want to. If Ellen has a dress with more than eight yards in it, they find fault about our being extravagant. If less than eight yards, then Jeff don't provide for his family. If Ellen or the children have a decent pr. of shoes, that is extravagant. When those shoes get poor, then Jeff don't support his family and I begin to hear it hinted that this one or that one said they would help Ellen get a bill from me. If I go to them about it, they will say that the other one said so. And so it goes. They find fault with us no matter what we do. You know Ellen was sick soon after I had that breaking done. Her sickness cost me \$150. That I could not pay until last summer for I had put all that I could stand in to the braking on the place. Then the sickness on top of that put me in a hard spot. But thank the lord it is all paid and it is no wonder that we have

not got means to go on to the farm this spring.

I guess you will think that I have got on a bit of writing. Well I have so you will think just right. But please do not think that I write this stuff on the account of any thing that Ida said for of course I do not believe that she heard Mother and Bertha blowing about me. Nor don't believe any of you that I have got to drinking for there is not any one that abhors a drunkard any worse than I. I understand that Charles told some of you that I did not drink. If so he told the truth. But how I wish I had a good drink of old rye now. I guess you will not worry much about that. I must stop so to write to Bertha. Write soon and oblige your ever friend.

Jeff

[In Ellen's handwriting in the margin:] Addie have you got that letter that Charley wrote to Father telling us to come up here. If you have, when you write to me again, I wish you would send it to me. I want to read it over. Be sure and do it.

[In Jeff's handwriting in the margin:] When we first come here, Charles had two extra cows and he was a going to let us take them. His wife said she would shoot them before she would let us have them. Soon after both of them died, so it saved her the trouble. Charles and Al would be all right if they could. I have not written much yet. Wait until I see you.



Jeff to Adie

[In Ellen's handwriting:]

April 6th

Dear Sister,

I set up almost all night waiting for Jeff to exhaust his stock of knowledge so I could have the pen and then had to go to bed without writing. Did you miss Mary's picture out of your album. Ida or Charles took it out so she said, and burned it. But Mary has had some taken and Susie to. She said she was agoing to send them down to replace the one you had. I told Jeff I did not believe she saw any letters. I can't believe a word she has told us. I was up to Mary's last week and Ida got a letter while I was there and said it was from Oscar. She would not let me read it or see the name either. It was only half a sheet of letter paper and only one side half written on. I don't want to write home what she said about Jeff. But I'll tell you when I come home. I don't care enough about it to write it over. As Jeff says, I can't blame her for lieing. But I do for her bad actions, for she is old enough to know better. You have just as good an opinion of her as folks do here. I believe every body hates her. One of my neighbors said if they wanted to keep her name good there, they had better leave her at home.

Jeff gets rather excited when he think over all that has been said and done since we came here. But he has not written

any thing but the truth.

Write soon. I believe I got all of your presents and I thank you very much.

Ellen

I guess you won't want us to write again very soon when you read all of this.

[No date]

[Written on a page from a ledger:]

Sister Bertha,

I suppose you think strange my writing on this kind of paper, but I have got an account against you that I want you to pay and it is necessary that I should make it out on ruled paper so I tell you what it is.

Miss Bertha Spaulding

to one Pida cow	\$100
" " " calf	25
" " " pig	<u>10</u>
Total	\$134

When do you think you can pay it. Now Bertha, I hear you don't like me. And this is why I dun you. You know that I let you have that Pida cow don't you. And I let you have Pida when she was a calf so there is the cow and the calf, and the pig you know just as mutch about as I do. So there is no mistake about it. Write soon. Carie makes me think of you every day. I

never have seen a child of her age that talked and used such big words as she does. One day Mira said to the table give me some tato. Carie stuck up her nose and said that is not the way Mira, its potatoes. She thinks she is boss and all hands. Mira gives up to her pretty well. Neither of them has ever raised their hand to strike the other. It don't do for me to get any of Ellen's things or to scufle with her. Carie will come at me with her mouth wide open and she will bite to if she can get hold. They are both good little girls if I do say it, but I don't know as they are any better than you was. Carie tells a great deal of what hapened when she was a little girl. You would laugh to hear her talk. They have got a nice cat and when I get any thing new that pleases her she will show it to the cat and talk to it the same as to any one.

Jeff

[In Ellen's handwriting:]

April 6th

I think Jeff has got a writing fit on. He has written over every piece of paper in the house and then commenced to fill his account book. But he began to get sleepy and thought he would not fill it this time. It is raining to day for the first time this spring. The snow is all gone, and we have had prairie fires already this spring. I would like some of your maple sugar pretty well. I have been knitting me some tidys. I have made a round one and am now making a square one. I was

very glad to get those verbena seed for I have only three plants. Those plants that Mother sent me are all alive but one petunia. I think they will all live. Tell Mother she need not worry about my children. They don't run in the street. They stay at home, and what's more, I stay and see to them. Mira don't go to Charley's to play for I won't let her. I had enough of those children when I lived there, and it was a blessed good thing that Charles turned us out when he did. We are getting along finely now. Charles and Almon use me well enough if it was not for their wives. I never had a word with either one of them yet. I take every thing very easy since I was sick. I don't fret much. I found it did not pay. It was not so far to Charley's but what I might have went and seen him before he started. But I did not feel disposed to. I thought he might come and tell me he was agoing. I did not know they were agoing, not by their letting me.

Tell Father we get dried apple for one shilling a pound, 12½ cents.

I will send you some blocks as soon as I can cut them out. Bird all of you direct your letters to Mrs. Jeff Miller instead of Ellen, because Ida has got in the habit of calling for my mail and when she gets one, some of them read it and seal it up again. I have a number that I know have been opened, but Jeff forbid the post master to let any body have our mail but him self. Ida called for this last letter we got, but the

postmaster would not let her have it.

Tell Father they had their City Election last Tuesday and Charles was elected Alderman in the third ward. I guess this will do for one letter.

Ellen

Eau Claire April 20th/72

Dear Parents,

We received your letter a week ago last Monday. It found us all well but Jeff. He has been having the mumps but is well now. We are having splendid weather here now. The roads are dry and dusty as in summer. The wind blows pretty hard to day and last week there was three days and nights the wind blew a perfect hurricane. We have not had but very little rain this Spring. People are making their gardens. Mary went up to Almon's Thursday, said they were feeling very bad about loosing one of their cows. The barn door blew open, got in to the feed, ate so much it died. But Almon went and bought another. He said there was no great loss without some small gain. He bought a new milk cow. But Charles has lost one of his cows this Spring that was down in the country to his brother in laws, and last fall he had a nice two year old heifer come up missing, never could get any track of her, probably some of the Dutch butchers here picked her up.

We have not received any paper yet. It is a good while

a coming. We think it must be lost.

Tell mother I did not get any bulbs last Spring, but Mary and Lizzie got some. I thought probably she did not send me any. Ask her if she sent some to all of us. If she did, mine was lost. I did not get any.

Monday, April 22nd

I will try and finish my letter. Have been waiting to see if the paper came today, but no paper. Write and tell me if it was sent the same time the letter was.

The steamboats are running again. There was two up today. The Company are starting their mills this week. There is a big log jam up the Chippeway twelve miles above Chippeway Falls, said to be eight miles long and thirty feet deep, and the river falling. The prospect for getting logs down look pretty dubious. They have had a good drive on the Eau Claire River. The water is very low in the Chippeway on the account of being so dry last Fall. And the snow all melted off with out any rain. Write and tell us if you have heard from Asa. We have not moved yet but shall in a week or so. We shall look for Mr. Vinton next week.

I hardly know what to write. I am in a hurry to send this out by the mail to day. I wish you would write as soon as you get this. I am anxious to get my flower seeds. I think it must have been taken out here.

Tell Birdie the school commenced to day, after a vacation

of three weeks. Mira did not go. I thought it would not pay to let her go, as we shall move so soon. I will close for this time. My love to all.

From Ellen to Father and Mother

Eau Claire, June 17th/72

Dear Sisters,

I suppose you begin to think I have forgotten to write to you but I have been very busy moving of late, moving and getting settled. We have only moved a little ways from where we lived before. It is the second house from Charley's down town and upon the same street. We have to live up stairs. The man that owns it lives below. I have two large rooms, two bedrooms and a clothes room. They are very pleasant rooms, I suppose. Charley's folks feel better now. Just as soon as we moved out they had the house raised and the cellar walled up and the\_\_\_\_\_. [Letter cut off.] A family just moved into it. Charles never fixed it a bit while we lived there. There was no stops around the windows. It was pretty cold in the winter. But never mind, we are all right yet. After Jeff got over the mumps last spring, he hired out to a mecannic and has worked with him ever since. He has got so that he can handle the carpenter tools pretty readily.

I have not seen All or Lizzie to speak to them for a long time. I see them come down town quite often, but they are

always in a hurry. Mary says they are getting rich. She and Charles went up there a week ago yesterday and staid all day. Lizzie has made her a new rag carpet and she has papered her house all over new, got a lot of new pictures and fixed up awful nice this spring.

Oh: about two week ago I got the first papers and seeds that Mother sent me. I had got some of the seed down that she sent last and my verbina and canna were all up growing finely when the others came. Those seed you sent in the letter I only had one seed come up that is quite a large plant. I planted those tomatoes. I have one dozen nice large plants. They ought to have been set out long ago. The man that lives here said I might set them in his garden. He said if he had only known a little sooner that we was coming there he would have saved a part of his garden for me. He has a large garden spot, but he had it all planted over when we came here. I think I am pretty well supplied with flowers and seeds, but I shall keep them for next year. I shall have a place for them. I only sowed some that I can keep in boxes. I have some house plants but not half as many as I want. Tell Mother I have found out how to change the color of the Hydrangea from a pink to blue. Take one sixth part of iron filings and mix it with the earth in which the plant is grown in. It will change it to blue. Tell Father to go to the machine shop and get some iron filings so Mother can try it. I never have seen any Hydrangea since I



came here. Well I have got to the end of my paper and not a word said about ourselves. We are all well but Carrie she has a severe cold. Jeff has come to his dinner so I must stop. I have written this in a hurry and I guess you will \_\_\_\_\_ when you read it. I want to send this out by to day mail and it is two oclock. \_\_\_\_\_ East.

Eau Claire, July 14th

Sister Bertha and Adie,

I suppose I shall have to start this letter or it will not ever be started. We are all well except Carie. She has been eating some grean aples to day. I guess they do not agree with her. She said she did not eat but five. I brought some ice cream home to night and it was splendid. But then we are having so many good things that we don't mind any thing about it. I will tell you what we had for supper. Well we had some bread and butter and some tea and some -- Oh that's all. we had a tip top good feast the fourth. It is awful hot here this summer. I have let my farm to halves. Every thing looks fine. I am to work for the same man, have help build to splendid houses and am at work on a store now. There is now building on the east side ten stores, a very large hotel, and a large bank building oposit Music Hall. Bangs and Fish are doing the most of the work. Houses are going up in every section. There is more going on this summer than ever. Land

is coming up. There is a man that wants to go and look at my farm but I can't get time to show it to him. It will pay the interest on two thousand dollars this year if the crops keep on the way they are now. I did not get any breaking done this spring as I wanted to. Two men agreed to brake for me but the season was so short or some other reason that they did not get to it. It is to bad. I must go to bed. [From Jeff.]

[In Ellen's handwriting:]

Sunday, July 27th

Sister Addie and Birdie,

Jeff wants to know if I am ever going to finish this letter that he commenced two weeks ago. Of course I am. To commence with we are all well as usual. Mira is having the whooping cough but not very hard. We had a call from All and Lizzie to day. \_\_\_\_\_ to their Church as usual. They go \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday. All said he had harvested his winter wheat and rye. We are having a hot summer. We have got a nice garden and a large one to. I have got lots of flowers. I have one stalk of gladiolus in blossom now and some lovely double balsams. I suppose you are picking lots of black raspberrys these days. If you have plenty, I wish you would pick one quart of large one for me, and dry them in the sun. I want them for seed. If I don't come down this fall, you can send them to me. Write and tell me if Mother's cranberrys grew that she carried home. I am agoing to plant some in the marsh upon our place next

Spring when we get up there. Jeff has let out \_\_\_\_\_ grass to man to cut on shares. \_\_\_\_\_ will have half of.

Jeff played his big fiddle for a dance last Friday night, and the night of the Fourth he played all night. At Music Hall they had a big dance.

Dr Vinton's mother and sister from Ellicottville have been out here on a visit, went home last week. I did not have a chance to see them. They liked the place very much. I don't get over the river very often. I have to stay here to see to things. Jeff has to go the other side to work every day. Jeff and the girls are a bed and asleep, and I have come to the end of my paper, must stop writing this time.

Carrie wants me to tell you she has got two cats now, and she has got a doll and Mira one. I forgot to tell you I broke a machine needle off in my finger. I was sewing, got almost to the end of my cloth, when Carrie came to me with some thing to look at. I turned to look at her and let my finger run under the needle, went right through the nail in to my finger. I had to have the doctor take it out. It hurt pretty bad I almost fainted.

Write soon as you get this. Tell me all the news. I sent some papers to Father and will send some more with this.

Tell Mother to save lots of flower seeds and everlasting flowers for me. I have not got many everlasting flowers. No more this time.

Ellen

Eau Claire, July 27, 1872

Dear Sister,

I received your letter last Sunday. It found us all well and enjoying the best of health. I have just finished my Saturday's work, and I thought I would set down and write to you. I got the box of plants Wednesday the 24th, but they were too wet to keep and all of the soft wooded plants were all rotted. The Fuchsia that had a root on I think is a going to live but the other Fuchsia were spoilt. The lilies, tube rose, ever blooming pink, roses, and some of the geranium I think I will get started. I am very sorry for I wanted them so bad. I think if Mother had just put the damp moss around them it would have been better. I guess Father will think it did not hardly pay to send them. I did not intend to have Father pay the freight. If you do not think it is too much trouble I wish you would try it again. Tell Mrs. Foskit I thank her very much for those slips. I wish they had all lived.

You wanted a description of my tree plant. It looks as near like a young sage sprout as any thing I can compare it to. The leaves are the same color and dented like sage, and long but not so pointed. And the leaves and stem are covered with a white fuzz like that upon a thistle. Some have asked me if

it was sage. It is about five inches high and as large around as a pipe stem. It don't seem as tho it would ever be as large as you wrote it would be.

Jeff is at work upon Musier Hall. [Crossed out: They are building one story higher than it was before it burned. Over the cross-out: Jeff said it is a mistake. It is no higher than it was before.] They will have it completed in August. Jeff, Mr. Vinton and Merriman played for a dance last night here in town.

Jeff has bought that Irishman's place that he wrote to you about for eight hundred dollars. Paid two hundred dollars down, and makes a payment every fall of two hundred. He got for his place nine hundred lacking ten dollars, \$890. I suppose Almon feels pretty jealous because he bought it. He tried to buy it away from Jeff but he could not raise the money. He had to borrow \$40 of Charles a little while ago to pay for that piece of land across the road opposite this house. He came very near loosing it. He had built a fence on the road the whole length of it and he never had paid a cent on it. I thought that was a great way to do business. Lizzie has not been in here but once this summer and that was the Fourth. She staid about five minutes. She is mad at me I think, but I don't know what about. We never had any words at all. She is getting to rich to notice her poor relation. Well she said: all I have got say about Ellen's I think she has got the Spaulding extravagance, ha, ha.

That pleases me. Well I guess I will stop writing for this time. Mira has sent Birdie a piece of her dress and Carrie's. The blue is the trimming. Ida said she had written a letter to Birdie and sent it. Write and let me know how much it cost to send the box and if you think it best to send another, I think a little moss put lightly around them will do. I guess they water them all the way out here. I know they wet them here the day they come. You know the box was pretty tight and it held all the moisture. I can't bear to give it drip. Write as soon as you get this. I think you done well for you, Miss Addie. Try again.

Ellen

Mira said she was agoing to write to Birdie next time. I have a poor pen so I will stop writing.

Ellen

Eau Claire, November 23, 1872

Dear Sisters,

I have just received your letter to day that was mailed the twenty third of last month, four weeks ago to day. Ida brought it down to me, said it was in their box. I don't see why it is we have such a time getting our mail. We have rented a box for the past year. We have wondered why you did not write to me. I wrote you when I got my box of plants, but have received no word from you until now.

We are all well. We had pretty cold weather the past week. Some snow. The ground is covered with snow, but the sun is melting it away fast to day.

Lizzie and Gortie was here Thursday afternoon. They had been to Monominie to visit her brother, went Monday, intended to stay all the week but Gortie was so homesick she had to come back Wednesday. She staid all night with Mrs. Vinton, came here the next day. Got a chance to ride home with some of their neighbors. Almon is at work here in town for the Eau Claire Company. This week he is in the flouring mill and a Norwegian man is driving his team. They do not intend to come home this winter. They told me so. I suppose they want to get a little richer before they go. Almon has raised more grain upon his farm this year than he ever has before. They made preparations last Spring to go home this fall. She done lots of sewing for her self and All. But I don't know any reason why they don't go.

Charles was sick election week. Laid up all the week with his side. I guess he had a pretty bad spell, but he is at work again now. I was in to see him, said he was going home soon, showed me his new suit he got to wear and a new gold fob chain for his watch. Thought he would be there to spend Christmas. Mary said she could not go, but she wanted Charles to. If I had not heard him say, so many times that he was agoing, I should believe it. But he has been going down there every

Spring, fall and winter since I came here, and he has not got there yet.

Ida said to day her Father wanted to surprise you, walk up from the depot, not let you know until he got there. If he comes you need not tell him I wrote he was coming. Burn up my letters for if Mary happens to come and gets a chance to read them, it would just suit her to bring back some thing about Jeff and I should not make any preparations for I don't think they will come. Charles may, if he happens to get a fit on and start right off. Mary is doing her work alone now, but has had a woman sewing for her this week making her a new black Alpacca dress.

Jeff has bought him a big fiddle. It is as high as he can reach. He has to stand up to play it. He plays for dances, concerts and with Vinton. It cost thirty four dollars.

I think you have had more than your share of peaches this fall. I think we will get some pictures taken before long. Carrie looks like a little boy. She and Carrie Williams went to work and cut her hair almost all off her head. I wanted to shake them both. I have not got the paper Mother sent. There Jeff has come from work. Says he has got to write a little. I will stop.

Ellen



Eau Claire, Nov 23rd [ 1872 ]

Sister Bertha and Adie,

I suppose Adie thinks its some thing great to have a beau. There was a nice young girl wanted an introduction to me last night. She thought I was single. She said I was handsome. She thought I was about twenty two. I don't want Ellen to know anything about it, nor your Mother. But you have one consolation. Almon says he is a goin to see that Ellen is cared for so you may not worry. My Lord, if you knew the kind of care she has had from all of them, you would think the less of it the better. If she was ever acused of being a lyer or stealing or being nasty or keping bad company, it was not untill after she came here. Ain't it strange how quick some will change. They dare not say any more to me abot it. Let us have peace. Have you heard from Greeley lately. How is that Greeley blub of Randolph. Has Rodney started for Albany yet. Tell us all the news. You can bet I am feeling cross to day, played all night and worked all day. I tell you I make things snap around when I get a goin. But when I think of that girl and my farm, it makes me all right again. So I will close while I have a clever streak on. There Cary has tipped the ink over. Now I am cross again. Oh if you could see me now. I must go to band practice, so good night.

Jeff

[In Ellen's handwriting:]

Well I declare. I believe Jeff is crazy. He is full of the old ned all the time, teases the girls life out of them. Carrie wants me to lock him out doors. He make a practice of working the next day after playing. But then he ain't out all night, only until two and three and some times gets \_\_\_\_\_ half past twelve. But last night they were out all night, they had so far to ride.

Oh: say Birdie have you ever written to Ida. Write and tell me. Tell Mother I have just been twisting some of my yarn I brought from home. I think I shall make a short piece of rag carpet this winter. I made twenty seven and a half yards last fall. But I have not got enough to cover my two bedrooms and spare room. I guess you will not want to write me again for six months. Tell Father and Mother I have sent them our last papers to read.

Mira says oh Ellen don't write any more, I have got sick of seeing folks write. Good night.

Ellen Miller

Eau Claire, Jan 5th, 73

Sister Bertha,

Ellen has not written all the news. She and the baby is as well as can be expected. It is the smartest little thing you ever see of its age.

Ellen is just as mad about them pretty girls as she can

be. She think that no one has any claim on me but her self. The girls is all after me. I don't know what to do. What would you write and tell me. [Ellen's handwriting: "Jeff could not live if he did not write some nonsense."] Have Adie come out here and go to school a year. They have a spendid graded school here. Then after she goes home you can come and stay a year. It is a good place to live here, but I would prefer living on a farm. I am very anxious to get on to our place but do not want to go on until I can go in good shape. I am a goin to build so to have water run through the house. Then I have another nice spring in about twelve rods from the house for cattle to go in winter. Then in another direction about fifteen rods there is another very large spring that I am a goin to fix up for geese and ducks. Tell your Father that he saw the poorest part of that land. I have got some 80 acres as good as that around the little marsh that I first had. Such land is worth more than it will bring here. Tell your Mother that my farm is not for sale and see if she will believe it. Our young child's name is Carie. Apr fool.

from Jeff Miller

Yes a little baby indeed. I think she is a pretty big one. She don't like to be called a baby.

Ellen

Tell Mother my tree plant all died, after I brought it in the house last fall. It grew awful fast. It had six

branches from the main stalk about a foot and a half high. First the leaves began to drop off. Then the end of the stalk began to die down. I don't know what made it unless I kept it to wet. I pulled the root up yesterday. It was all dead. Where did you get the seed. My other plants are all nice. I have pretty hard work to keep them from freezing some nights.

Write and tell me how Uncle Nick is getting along. Tell me if Ed Culver died. I heard that he did, then I heard not. How does Grandfather and Grandmother get along. Give my love to them.

Good bye for this time.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Jan 26th

Sister Bertha,

As Ellen has a lame wrist I will have to write for her. We are all well excepting me. I have got the Epizooty, am most sick with it. We have had a very cold winter. Some say it has been as cold as 52° below zero. A week ago yesterday morning was the coldest. It has been down to 40° a number of times. The snow is about two feet deep now. This has been the coldest winter ever known so they say. Ellen wanted very much to be with you Christmas and Newyear. She thinks of coming home next fall. Charles and Ida talk of coming next March, but

it will turn out as it generally does. If they should come Ellen wants you to hide all of our letters so she cannot find them. You will have to keep them close and every thing else that you don't want her to see. If she ever does come you will know more than you do now. If we have good luck we shall see you in a year or two.

February 6th, 1873

Dear Sisters,

I see I have got to finish this letter myself. Jeff commenced it a week ago last Sunday. We are all well as usual. Jeff is better of his Epizod but has got a bad cough yet. I received some papers yesterday, was very glad of them. I told Jeff not to write any thing about Charley's coming down there because I had written it so many times I had got sick of it. But Ida is all up in end about it, says they are surely agoing in March. She is all the one I have heard say anything about it. She is anticipating on having a glorious time down there, says she is agoing all over Randolph. You want to keep watch of her. May be you won't thank me for saying any thing about her (but I think forwarned forarmed), for I have been through the mill and I know I never had a box, cupboard, or drawer but what she has plundered through it.

Birdie if she comes you must hold your temper, not get mad and tell her what I write to you, for I would not like to have Charley know that I had cautioned you about her. But I

won't say any more.

The girls Mira and Carrie are making paper dolls at one side of the table and they make such a buzzing. I cannot half write. Mira wants to send some to you, but I tell her you would laugh to get paper dolls.

Carrie wanted me to tell Aunt Bodie that their nigger kitty was dead. Yes and they felt so bad they cried all one day, both of them. Carrie says I wish Nigger wouldn't die, don't you MaMa. I told her I was very sorry. She said so be I. So Jeff went up town and brought home a great large cat that will jump over their arms and that pleases them very much.

Tell Mother the girls have not given me any bulbs of any kind. Last Spring Mary had nine or ten Gladiolus bulbs but they were all destroyed but two. I believe those blossomed, and I don't know whether she saved them or not. I would like some next Spring if it will not be to much trouble to you. Jeff has just got home from band practice and wants me to tell you he has got a new horn, cost one hundred dollars. Jeff paid in what he got for his old instrument and the rest was a present from the band.

Monday Eve, Eau Claire, Feb 10th/73

Dear Father,

I guess you will think I have got a writting fit on to write so often, but Jeff heard up town to day, by the way of

Vinton, that Charles and Ida were agoing to start for Randolph one week from to day. So I thought I would let you know, and you would be prepared for them. Vinton is very sure they will go. I have not seen any of them for a week. I don't believe they intend to let me know it. Do not tell them I wrote. May be Charles will write before he starts. I will not write any more this time. I must send this to the office in the morning and you will be sure to get it this week. Good bye. Write soon.

From Ellen to Father

Tuesday Morning, 11th, 1873

Mary was down here this morning but she did not say a word about Charley's going, nor I did not ask her, and that makes me think they will go. I think she came down a purpose to see if I knew any thing about it because Jeff met Ida on the street last night, said they were agoing a week from today. I think they want to take you by surprise. If they don't go soon I will write and tell you.

Almon came in just now, said Charles said he would start the 20th but I think they will be there next week.

Yours in haste. Ellen

Eau Claire, June 1st, 1873

Dear Sisters Addie and Birdie,

It has been a long time since I received your letter, but I have been very busy. We have moved over the river upon the west side and I have been making garden and cleaning house. We have had a very cold dry backward Spring. No rain, not a drop until about a week ago it commenced to rain and has rained about every other day since. Thursday we had the hardest rain storm I ever saw. I have got peas, beets, onions, beans, squashes, cucumber, lettuce, tomatoes, cabbage, and potatoes, all up and growing nice in my garden. I have just been out picking the bugs off my potatoes. I could not find many. I guess there won't be as many bugs this year as there has been. Any way I hope not.

Mary and Susie came over here last Friday and staid all day. Charles drove over after them at night. We don't have to pay toll now to cross the big bridge. It is a free bridge now.

Almon and Lizzie was here last Sunday. Lizzie said she had done a man's work this Spring, worked out door with All. They two planted eleven acres of corn, and Lizzie kept right up with him. She is tough. Mrs. Stevens has got a baby boy.

Jeff is at work for the same men, Bangs and Fish, that he worked for last summer. Gets two dollars a day. He played for a concert and dance at Music Hall last Friday night, was up all night, got about one hour sleep before he went to work. Tomorrow night he is agoing to Chipeway Falls to play



for a dance. [In Jeff's handwriting: And I am just as cross as I can be to day to.] There I would thank Jeff to let my letter alone. He has been asleep all day, just got up long enough to read what I had written and leave his mark.

We have quite a pretty place to live. It's on a very pleasant street, but I don't think I like it as well as the other side of the river. I tell you I have got sick of cleaning tenent houses, hoeing out the back alleys and cellar. They are always full of filth. We have to pay eight dollars a month rent. But we shall go upon our place in the Spring, and then good bye to city life. Jeff is talking of going to the woods to work this winter. We want to lay up just a hundred dollars this Summer out of Jeff's wages. I think I shall come home this fall if we are all well. Why don't Maranda and Af write to us. We don't hear a word from Jeff's folks. We have written two letters to his mother but no answer.

[In Jeff's handwriting:]

Sister Bertha and Adie,

I don't think I shall write much to day for I am so tired. I have let my braking out to halves this year and have let a job of braking 15 acres more this spring or summer.

[In Ellen's handwriting:]

Jeff thought he would write a little but his courage failed him. Jeff will cut the hay upon the place himself.

There has been fifteen or sixteen ton cut there of marsh hay, and I don't know but more. That brings ten or twelve dollars a ton here in the winter. But I must stop writing this time. I can't think of any news to write. We are all well.

Monday morning, 2nd

We have had a nice little shower this morning, and it look now as though it might rain pitchforks. Tell Livonia she need not be particular about waiting a year before she writes to me. I suppose Mother has got lots of flowers by this time. My musk plant is in blossom that you sent me.

Oh I forgot to tell you Mrs. Vinton has got a little baby girl four weeks old. It is a handsome baby to. I tell you it ain't much larger than a pint cup. Did you get a paper with some pieces. Write soon. Tell me all the news.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Sept 28th, 1873

Dear Sisters Addie and Birdie,

I received your letter some time ago, but I have been very negligent about writing. I was very busy getting ready for the Fair. We are having cold dreary weather here now. To day it has rained all day. We are all well. We all went up to All's and staid two days. Jeff sprained his ankle so he could not work for a week. They came down after us. All has got his thrashing done. He wanted me to tell Father he had

284 bu      Wheat

315 "        Oats

70 "         Rye

He wanted to know if I thought there was any danger of his starving this year. I told him I thought there was some prospect of his going to the Poor House. He is feeling pretty well off. All and Lizzie made some preparation to go home this Fall, but they have given it up long ago. Almon could not sell his colts and get his price for them. So he thought he would keep them until next Fall. They were keeping it a secret. But I told Jeff all the time. I knew they were getting ready. After Lizzie told they thought of going, I told her I knew it all the time. She laughed, said it was funny. They had never said any thing to any one about it. I can read her like a charm.

I don't hardly know whether I shall come home this fall. If I do it will be pretty late I am afraid. I think I can go better now than I can when we get upon a farm, and we shall go there next Spring.

And I want to go to Rochester to consult a doctor there about my deafness. I think I am almost as deaf as Mother was when I came away. It seem as tho I am. I have never done any thing for it, and I want to see Dr. Lighthill of Rochester.

I think your pictures look natural, but Mother's I don't think she looks very natural. I thought we would go over the

river and have some taken before I sent this. But I will have to wait until next time. Jeff went to St. Paul last week with the Band. The Firemen had a parade there the first day of the State Fair. There was ever so many Company of Firemen together, about two thousand Firemen in all and ten or twelve Bands, and Vinton's Band of Eau Claire took all the praise. I tell you it made Vinton feel pretty grand. They played for the Fair here three days. They have the Fair out upon the Prairie as you go to Almon's, the grounds enclosed, and a price stand for the Speaker and seats built with a roof and everything in style. I went the last day but it was such a cold day I almost froze. I will send you our last papers, and you can read the premiums.

Mira is agoing to school this fall. She is out of school until Wednesday. Her teacher is away so there is no school in her room. You wanted to know if Ida came to see me. Not very often I can tell you. She has only been here once this Summer. Then she staid about ten minutes. I will send you a few pieces of our dress and aprons. You must write soon. Tell me why Maranda and Af don't write. I'll pound her when I get home to pay for not writing. Where is Inez. Now I think of writing to her every day in answer to her letter but keep putting it off.

Ask Livonia if it ain't almost a year since I wrote to her. I have got a very poor pen to write with and I will stop

writing for fear you cannot read what I have written. Tell Mother I had lots of nice flowers this Summer. Make me a nice bouquet of Everlasting Flowers.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Dec 14th

Dear Sisters,

I suppose I will have to write and tell you that I am a going to have me a new plug hat and cane, or you would not ever know it for my wife will not ever write any of the best of the news. Oh won't I look gay with my plug hat and my gold headed cane and my big fiddle on my back marching through town. We are all well as usual. Every thing is all lovely.

[In Ellen's handwriting:]

Yes of course Jeff had to write a little first. Just enough to dirty this paper. I am almost ashamed to write. I have neglected writing so long. Carrie was quite sick with a cankered sore throat when I got your letter. So I kept delaying it. We are having a fine winter so far. Snow fell the 22 day of October, and we have had sleighing ever since except a very few days. It has not been very cold yet.

How are potatoes down your way, pretty scarce. We have to pay \$1.20 one dollar twenty cents a bushel. Butter 35 cents a pound, eggs 40 cents a dozen. Every thing is high in the line of provisions except flour and meats. Don't I wish I

lived on a farm and had all these things to sell.

I wanted to come home pretty bad last fall. But Jeff could not get his money due him, and I made up my mind it would not be prudent to come in these times when money is so scarce. You said Grandfather bought Uncle Curt's place on the corners. I don't know which one you mean. If you have got Uncle Curt's address, send it to us and we will write to them. I would like to see Grandmother and G-father. I tell you she had the best bread that I ever ate, and every thing else was so good I could not eat enough when I was there. Tell her I wish she lived with me. Where does Will Covert live, and what has become of Asher. I have not heard a word about him since I came here. Ida came over and made me a visit Tuesday. It is the first time since I moved over this side the river. And Mrs. Cass was here Friday. Charley's folks are all well. And All's so far ought I know. I have not seen them this winter. Charles says he is agoing down home the last of winter and take Mary and Susie, little Charley. So Ida told me. But I don't think you need to make any preparation yet a while. I think Ida is improving. She carried herself finely over here. She has had quite a sick spell this winter. Erypipiles in the head. She had to have her hair all cut off.

Birdie, Jeff wanted me to tell you we had oysters for breakfast. We have a letter from Asa quite often, but he never said he had two babies. I knew it last May. Uncle John wrote

and told us. I guess I have written enough this time. My pen is so poor I can't write. I stepped out door to get a pail of water, fell down and put one of my thumbs out of joint. Mira has been writing to you Birdie. I guess you can't read it. Write soon.

From Ellen

You must eat lots of apples for me this winter. I don't think I shall have a great many to eat. Green apples are five and a half dollars a barrel here, dried ones one shilling a pound.

Ellen

Saturday, Eau Claire, April 17th, 1874

Dear Sister,

I received your letter last night, and hasten to answer it. We are all well and all the rest of the folks are for ought I know. One of Lizzie's brothers lost his wife this week. She was burried Wednesday. They lived at Menominee. She left four children, one a baby six months old. Lizzie brought the baby home with her when she came from the funeral. I don't know how long she will keep it.

The snow is all off the ground here and we have not had a drop of rain this Spring. Yesterday I worked in the garden half the day. It was so warm to day. There is a cold raw wind. It is not very pleasant to be out. Almon thinks his

winter wheat is mostly killed. We have had such warm days and frosty nights.

I don't know why Charley did not go home. He talked of it last fall, was agoing to take Mary, Susie and little Charley. But I guess he thought he could not afford it if he builds a new house this Summer, or he talks of raising his dwelling house up one story higher. They were agoing to build a large upright part, had his stone and siding drawn there last winter. When Mary was here last they had not decided which to do.

They had a big fire over the river last week. The Eau Claire Lumber Co Store burnt down. I will send a paper that has a short sketch of it.

Tell Mother I got all the seeds but the Double Portulaca. Jeff opened my letter before he came home. I expect he lost it out, but he said he didn't. I was real sorry. I wish you would send me some seeds of all the kinds of flowers you have got to spare. Did Mother send any seed to me last Spring by Ida. What made me ask Ida said she put up some for me and when she got home she said she guess Mother forgot to send them. I never had any place for flowers since I came here until last Summer. I had beautiful ones but the season was so short that the frost killed them before they went to seed. I am going to send to Vick after a few choice kinds, and if I knew what Mother sent for, I would send for something different and divide



with her. I would like to have Mother send me a box of bulbs, if she has them I mean. Dahlias, Lillies, Tulips, Peonies, \_\_\_\_\_ Gladiolus, some of her flowering Almond tree, Spectabilis. I don't care how much, nor how many. Send all you can, and all the house plants, if you have any rooted all the better. I will send money enough to pay all the expense just as soon as it is warm, I think the last of this month. I would like to get them just as early as I can. If I have any kinds of seed that Mother don't have, I will send some. Does she have the Cypress Vine. I have the Scarlet.

May be we will want some your raspberrys a year from this Spring if you have any to spare then.

We are agoing to have our pictures taken just as soon as I can get the girls some summer suits made. I guess I have written enough for this time. If Aff goes to Cal, you and Addie can come up here and stay the summer with me. He will come to Chicago. Then you can come the rest of the way alone. I don't think it will pay Aff to go out there to work. It will cost him all he can earn to go and come. I would like to have them come up here. I don't suppose Aff would like the long winters we have. I don't think there is any place perfect, but this country suits me as well as any. Carrie is playing horse with my neck tie, tied to the leg of her rocking chair, so I think it is time for me to quit and stop the racket. Write soon. Tell me all the news.

Ellen to Birdie

Eau Claire, August 30th [1874]

Dear Sisters Birtie and Addie,

We received your letter Thursday, was very glad to hear from home. We are all well. The reason I have not written before is this. I watched and waited for a box of plants and they did not come. I never received it. The longer I waited the more I dreaded to write for I thought some of you was sick the reason I did not hear from you. Did you get those papers with some seeds I sent to Mother last Spring. Did you write to me when you sent the box. We went to the Express Office. The Agent thought the box had not been received at the office. He wants the Agent there to trace the box from there. He said if anybody here is mean enough to claim the box, he wants to know who they are. He did not look on his book for we could not tell when it was sent, not having heard from you the time.

I don't know but you all would feel pretty grand if you knew what a nice baby daughter Almon has got, three months old the first next month. They have named her Mary Marcella. They think there never was another such a child. Lizzie wanted to go East this fall but All thought he could not spare the money so they give it up. But Charles and Mary are making preparations to start next month for home so they say, and take Susie and

Little Charlie. Ida was here a week ago Saturday, said her mother had her traveling dress all made. Almon told me not to write that Charles talked of going home, for he did not think he would go. If they did, let them take you by surprise. If they do go, I will let you know, and you can be just as surprised as if you did not know of their coming.

We have had a dry hot Summer. It has been very sickly here among children. There was seven funerals here in one day, all children about one year old with cholera infantum. The girls have been pretty well all summer. Carrie had a bad sore throat and cold on her lungs. We had the doctor for her but she was soon around. Jeff wants me to tell you we are having lots of watermelon to eat, such large ones you never see. Almon raised lots of melons this year. They brought down eighty or a hundred yesterday to sell, but we don't get one of them. We buy all we have. I would not ask them for one if I never had one. I have got a good garden this year, and lots of flowers.

Write and tell me how Albert likes Cal, and how Uncle Cirt's folks are getting along there. We wrote to them last Spring but have never received an answer. How are Jeff's folks. We have not had a letter from any of them for a long time I can't tell when. Does Maranda stay alone with her children. I should think Uncle Covert's folks were in a hurry to get Lydia married. I would have kept her at home a few years longer.

Where does the fellow live that she married.

It is getting late and I must stop writing and go to bed for I have to be up early. Jeff is at work on the E. C. Lumber Company Store. They are putting up a splendid brick store.

I will send a paper to hand to the Agent of the Express Office there to trace up the box. We would all like to know out of curiosity what became of it. Write and tell me what time it was sent. I can think of more to write but have not time. Write as soon as you get this and tell me all the news. No more this time. Excuse poor writing, for my pen is bad.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Nov 12th/74

Dear Sister,

We received your letter last Wednesday and those bulbs to, also a paper and picture for Mira. I was quite sick last week but am better now, so I can work some. Carrie was taken sick that next day after I wrote to you last. She had a run of Billious Fever, got rundown poor as a crow. Then Mira was taken down but not as sick as Carrie. They are both getting fat as pigs now. All the rest of the folks are well as usual. Jimmie has been here with us since the middle of September and is at work for the Eau Claire Lumber Co. He is agoing up

into the wood to work soon. Mary and Charles were over here one day last week. Charles said the Co would not let him off to go home this fall. They were so busy they could not spare him, but thinks he will get home this winter. I know he tried to get away this fall, asked Thorp for leave, but he could not get away.

That box of plants came to the Express Office the six of June. The agent says now, he notified us by mail. But I don't believe it for if he had I would have got it, for we rent a box and all of my mail is put into Jeff box, and that is not all. Jeff went to the Ex Office and inquired ever so many times but he said there was no box there. We can get pay for the box, and Jeff says he will to. I feel so provoked every time I think about, I can hardly contain my self. Right here under my nose almost and then to be cheated out of it makes me mad.

I put those bulbs right into boxes soon as I got them, and I am a going to keep them in the house or cellar this winter. When I got them they were just as fresh and nice as tho just taken out of the ground. Some of them have got sprouts half an inch out the ground already.

We are having fine fall weather here now, only had snow once, fell in the night, went off the next morning. Last year at this time snow was so deep, they had to brake roads.

Addie I wish you would come out here and stay a year with us. You can go to school every day, if you like, and Jeff said

he would send you money to come here with, if you would come.

Dec 20th

Sister Addie,

I commenced this letter over a month ago and I think it time it was finished, don't you. Well to begin with we are all well now and enjoying the best of health. The girls never were as fleshy as now, fat as pigs. Jimmie boards with us. He did not go to the woods. He has worked steady since he came here, grows fat, has gained 17 lbs in a month. We are having a warm winter so far, no snow, not enough to cover the ground now.

I have not seen All, folks for a long time don't know any thing about them. I expect they have got one of their mad fits on. Sometimes they come once in two or three week. Then again they won't come for four or five months, nobody knows whether they are mad or been mad. I hate such folks as that. I declare I do. They have been here once since last August, and stayed about five minutes the time.

We would like to go upon a farm in the Spring. But we don't like to run into debt. Bad enough, sometimes we think we will go any way. If we had more improvements, more land broke, we would not hesitate about it. We can't lay up much and live here in the city. It cost so much to live and pay house rent. Jeff has been offered \$1,400 fourteen hundred dollars for his place and I don't want him to sell it for that.

But I don't know but he will have to sell it. He has a payment due this month of \$200 two hundred and he can't get what is owing to him to pay it. You see he holds a mortgage of \$500 dollars upon the place he owned before he bought this one. They have paid a part of it and the rest has been due him over two years, and he can't get it. He has just foreclosed on the mortgage but it will be a year before he will get it. And the man that we owe is a poor man like ourselves, and is depending upon that to make payments upon his own place. Jeff wrote to Uncle John to see if he would let him the money but he said he had none. He would have to borrow it and charge us more interest and that we couldn't stand. We could not borrow money here and live. They let out money here for thirty days at ten per cent, and there is not much money here to let out. Every body that has money invest in Pine Land. Every body that has seen Jeff's place say it is as good a farm as there is around here. I guess we will manage to come out all right. We don't worry much about it for if we sell we shall buy another.

Tell mother those bulbs she sent me are growing nicely. I keep them in the front room and they grow all the time. Tell her I wish I had some of her stocking yarn she was spinning when you wrote to me, and some of her good Butter. We don't get very good Butter now. We pay 35 cts for butter, 45 cts for Eggs, and I am afraid I shan't get enough to make my Pumpkin

Pies for Christmas. I have got a glorious big Pumpkin in the cellar, to make pies of.

Tell Birdie I want to know if she drummed that Organ all to pieces.

Mira thinks there never was a nicer picture and paper, and wonders who sent them Birdie or Aunt Addie. Carrie said she guessed she would write to Aunt Birdie, gets her pencil and paper and marks it all over, and wants to know if that ain't writing and if Birdie can read it.

I guess I will stop writing for it is almost twelve oclock at night. The rest are all abed and asleep. I wish you would write to me often. It is getting quite a task for me to write. I have so much to do in the day time. I can't get the time to write, and then I have a house full of Company most all the time, so I am busy night and day. Jeff he scolds me because I don't write home oftener. I guess I am getting more negligent than anything else, but then you know "a poor excuse is better than none."

Give my love to Maranda and children. Tell her to write me a long letter.

My love to all the rest the folks. No more this time.  
Write soon.

From Ellen

To Addie

I suppose Jeff would like to write some, but he can't



write any in this letter.

August 27th, 1875

Dear Sister,

I am alone to day and I thought I would answer your letter I received some time ago. We are all well as usual. Jeff is out in the country at work cutting his marsh hay. He has been out there three weeks. He is building a grainery for a man when it is not good weather for haying he works at carpenter work. It has rained about every other day this month. We had a very dry season until the first of August. Jeff has got a big crop of grass on his marsh this year. Crops are all pretty good here but corn, not very good.

Charley's family are well. Mary was over here one day last week. Charley is building him a new dwelling house. I hear that it is agoing to be the nicest house in the City. They are going to have it heated by a furnace. It will be completed by the first of October. It is all lathed ready to plaster and primed over one coat of paint. I must go over next week and see how it looks. I expect they won't look at common folks when they get moved, especially Ida. She puts on more style than six whole families. She don't come to see me at all. She has not been here for a year and the last time she she was here her mother came with her. She knows I can't like her and I never will. I don't know what would become of her

if her father should die for I guess he is the only one that has any control over her at all. But I hear that she is a better girl than she used to be. I don't see her very often and I live so far away that I don't hear so much as I did when I lived over there. They have got one good child and that is little Charley. He is a perfect little gentleman. I like him awful well.

You wanted to know where I went the Fourth. Almon and Lizzie were here and spent the day. We all went over into the Sixth Ward to see a big balloon go up. But it only went up a little ways, and then came down again. All and Lizzie called here last Saturday. They tried to get their baby's picture to send down to you, but she wouldn't sit still long enough. She is quite a pretty looking child but one of the most disagreeable ones I ever see. You can't touch her or look at her but she will yah, yah all the time enough to make a body crazy or drive them out of their seven senses.

Now about my coming home. I expect I can come but it will be very late this fall. If I don't get ready to go soon I am thinking of coming the first of winter and stay until Spring and make a visit all around. Jeff says I can go if I want to just as well as not. And he will go to the Pinery to work this winter, him and Asa. And then when I come back here in the Spring I will bring Laura back with me to live. Jimmie talks of going back home this fall or did before he went

away. He is in Minnesota harvesting, about fifteen miles from St. Paul. He left here the Fourth of July. I wrote to him last week to find out if he intended to go home but I have not got an answer yet. One reason why I want to stay all winter for is this. I want to go to Rochester and have my head examined and see what the prospect of a cure is, for I am getting to be almost as deaf as Mother was when I came west. It seems as tho I grow deaf very fast. But they tell me not. I dread to come home on that account and I feel afraid to come alone. I shall bring both the girls with me. I want to come awful bad and I know I can afford to go to better now than any other time since we have been here. Charles told Asa that he was agoing down home this winter, but I know he won't. He has said so a great many times, but when the time comes he ain't never ready.

Asa is still driving team for the Co, but I don't see him but once a week. He is hauling supplies up to the camps on the river, and sometimes he has to go sixty miles up the river to the Co Farm and brings back a load from the farm. It is almost supper time and I must stop.

There I have had my supper now I will finish my letter. I can't half write to day. I have been sewing on the machine almost all day. I am tired. My hand trembles so I can scarcely hold the pen. Mira goes to a select school now, has been two week. We pay 25 cts a week. I have been teasing Carrie to

go to, but she won't go. Our graded school commences the first of September. Then I shall send them both there. Oh I almost forgot to tell you. I never got any papers. You said you sent some. They come to the office, and some one took them out, so they told Jeff. I meant to send some papers to Father before this but I have neglected it. I will try and send some next week.

Ask Addie if she can't find time to write to me once a month any way. And ask Mother what she would like to have me bring her, the best of any thing. I could get her some nice plants from the green house if I knew what she had, so I could bring her something new. I have got lots of flowers, but they are not so nice as I had last Summer. We have got a pretty good garden to, lots of cabbage, turnip, cucumber, beans, squashes and all such things.

Carrie said tell Aunt Birdie I am learning to knit. She is knitting her doll a scarfe now. To night they are sewing dolls clothes. I tell them they are botching. I guess I will stop writing and go to bed. I don't like to sit up late when I have to stay alone. Perhaps I will write some more tomorrow before I send it to the office. Now Birdie you will get this the first of the week so you will have all the week to read it, and then by Sunday you can answer it. Tell Addie and Maranda if they don't write to me I will pound them both when I get home. Tell Philonzo Carr to have those chickens good and fat

for I shall surely come after them. What has become of Livonia. You have not said a word about her for a long time and her and Fanny and all the rest of the good folks.

Saturday, 28th

There is not any prospect of my letter going to the office to day so to go out in to day's mail. For it has rained hard as it could pour ever since eight oclock this morning, and not a sign of clearing off. The streets are flooded with water. Now Birdie write soon. Don't wait as long as you did before. Tell me all the news. If Albert has got home from Cal, I never heard. How all the folks are and every thing you can think of. Don't say I never wrote a long letter. Good bye for this time.

From Ellen to Birdie and all  
the rest the folks

Birdie I wrote this letter a month ago but I will send it along for fear I never will get another one written. Write to me as soon as you get this.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Feb 7th, 1876

Monday Eve, Dear Sister,

Your letter came to hand to day and I will hasten to answer it. This finds us all well as usual. The girls are both going to school this winter. Carrie has never been to

school before, until this term. She went over the river to night and bought her a new First Reader and slate. She feels pretty proud of them too. I began to think you had forgotten how to write, or had run away, because you did not write. I was so disappointed because I could not go down there this winter, that I could not bear to set down and write that I could not come. I got almost ready but Jeff failed to raise the money because it is such hard times here now. He has money owing him but he could not get it. I told Asa not to tell that I talked of going home. Then if any thing should happen that I did not come you would not worry. I think Asa was very foolish in going back when he did. He left a good job here. He might have had a team to drive all winter. Jimmie took his team after he left, and toted supplies up the river to the camps until sleighing. Then he went to the woods to haul logs. We have not heard from him but once since he went to the woods, heard that he was doing first rate good business.

We have had a very beautiful winter here so far, just snow enough to make sleighing, and very warm and pleasant. I never saw a nicer winter in my life.

I have been over to Charley's once since they moved into their new house. They have got a splendid house now I tell you. Down stairs there is two parlors, one sitting room and a large square hall, dining room and kitchen and two pantries. They

have three pair of folding doors. The rooms up stairs are all large sleeping rooms with a closet to every room and Mary's room has two, one for Charles and one for her self. The hall is very large. They use it for a sitting room this winter.

Ida is attending school this winter. Mary says she will graduate in the Spring so she won't go to school any more. I thought to my self I wonder what she will graduate in. I am confident that she can't in any thing except "lieing" and deceit.

Charley's folks are well. I never saw Charley so fleshy as he is this winter. Jeff saw All and Lizzie Saturday over the river. They said they was agoing to write to Father yesterday. So I expect you will hear how they are. Almon has been raving and distracted to sell out and go to Florida this winter, and the last I heard he was agoing to Texas. But he don't seem to sell out yet and I don't think he will right away. Lizzie said she was coming down after me and take me home with her when she did not have so much to do. As near as I can find out she don't do much at home for she ain't there only about half the time. She has had a hired girl since last fall, hired one for a year. Jeff has gone over to Ferd Vinton's to practice to night. He has done lots of playing this winter. I have filled up this sheet and he told me he wanted to write some when he got home. But I guess he is agoing to stay all night for it is nearly eleven oclock and I must go to bed or

I shant want to get up in the morning. Send along your pattern and I will send you some flocks. Where is Addie. Why don't she write to me. How did Albert say Uncle Cirt's folks were getting along. Does Af talk of going there to live. Write and tell me all the news.

Ellen

Eau Claire, May 12th, 1876

Dear Sister,

As I have a few leisure moments, I thought I would write to let you know that we are all well as usual. Dennis and Charley got here one week ago last Wednesday morning. They were just thirty six hours coming through. They went to work the next Monday for the Eau Claire L. Co. Charles set them at work for \$26 dollars a month. They seem to like to work there first rate. Dennis was at work in one of the mill last Thursday and stepped through a hole in the floor and hurt one leg pretty bad, nothing very serious. He keeps at work. We had awful high water here the last of April. The Chippeway River was up twelve feet above low water mark, and the river was full of logs. They run at the rate of three million feet of logs per hour, so you may know by that what a sight it was. They had no control over them at all. They stopped the most of them. A Beef Slough down below here a run them into Half Moon Lake, so a great many was saved that would have been lost.



We are having a cold wet backward Spring, awful disagreeable. Last night it rained almost all night. To day it is cloudy and cold winds. It ain't so warm now as it was the last two weeks in April. Then people ploughed their gardens and planted them. But I guess the seed will rot this weather. Corn is up in some gardens. We have not made any garden yet. I want you to ask Mother to send me some flower seeds if she has got them to spare. Frost came so early last fall that I lost lots of my seed. They did not ripen. I would like to have a box of bulbs and plants sent to me if you don't mind the trouble of sending them, and have got them to spare. I was so disappointed in that other box. If you could send me some Gladiolus and Dahlias and all such bulbs. If they are sprouted put in a box and let the tops stick up through the slats. I saw lots of plants sent that way. Send me lots of house plants and don't pay the freight on them. I will see to that. If you will take the trouble to send them I will be much obliged. I always like to have some thing a little better than my neighbors. But I have always had the nicest flowers since I lived here. I will send some papers to father this time with out fail. I waited to get an East side paper to send to but I did not get one. These are the west side papers. Mira and Carrie are both at school. I will send you some pieces when I can get time to cut them out.

One of my neighbors, next door to me, was burried Saturday. She had been sick some time and got better and was in here in

just a week from the time she was here she died. She left a little girl about to years old.

Mary and Ida was over last week one day. Her sister fails slowly. They think she can't live much longer. I wish you and Father and Mother would come out here and stay all Summer. Now write to me as soon as you get this, and send me some seeds, and if you send me a box, write when you send it. I'll bet that agent won't cheat me out of another one.

I have not seen Almon's folks since I was up there. But Jeff stopped there two week ago, said they were all well.

Well I have filled my paper, not written any news either. I will try to think of more to write next time.

Ellen

How I would like a piece of new maple sugar from there. It don't taste as good here as the sugar made there does. Give my love to all the folks.

Eau Claire, June 6th, 1876

Dear Sister,

I received your letter and seeds, also the box. They come through all right. I got the letter the 25th of May and the box the next day, 26th. The bulbs and all that had roots are growing finely. The slips are all alive, but two Fuchias and one bogonia. I think the rest will all live. I feel awful proud of them I tell you. Mary was over here the

next day after I got them. She said she was in hopes they would all live so she could have some slips, when they rooted. She was almost sick when she was here. They burried her sister the Monday before. She had been up so much with her, she was about wore out. They burried her down in Gilmanton where her mother was burried. And it is quite a journey down there. They were gone three days. Charles and Mary just called here Friday, said she was feeling better. We are all well. Jeff was out last night, played all night for a dance on the north side. He feels pretty sleepy to day.

Jeff went up to Almon's Sunday. They think they will surely sell their place soon, and go to Florida. They intend to stop there and take Father with them. Lizzie said that was their intention now. We can't find out who talks of buying their farm, and I for one don't care, hope they will sell. They want to bad enough.

Charles and Mary talk of coming down there in September. Mary says that Charles can't get leave before that time.

We have funny weather this Spring. The first of this month it was cold enough to have a frost. For two nights I thought we surely would. It rained and hailed like fun, but crops and every thing looks promising.

I sowed all of my flower seed. They are just coming up.

There is a family just moved next door to me where that woman died I wrote to you about. The woman was out in her

yard sowing flower seeds. I stepped up to the fence and said Mrs. Elliott what kind of seeds you planting. She said I don't know Mrs. Miller what are they. They are some Hattie gave me (that is her sister in law). She said do you know what they are. I took the paper and looked at them and told her they were sun flower seeds. How she laughed. There she had planted her beds and mounds full of them. She had a whole hand full she said and put them all in but the few she had in the paper. I told her she could get some chickens this fall and fat them on sunflower seed. She thought her yard would look gay by and by. Well Birdie I have filled my paper with nonsense. But I can't stop to write more this time. It looks like rain and I must go and set out some tomatoe plants. I have written this in a hurry. Write soon. Give my love to all.

Ellen

Eau Claire, July 7th, 1876

Dear Sister,

Well Birdie I guess you think I am not agoing to write again. But I did write just as soon as I got the box, but neglected to send it to the office. Jeff would forget it every day. I thought I would write to day a tell you how we all get along. The folks are all well, that is for ought I know. Have not seen Almon's folks since you wrote to me. I am not feeling very well

myself. I have not been well for a year, but I keep about and do my own work the most of the time. They tell me I am homesick, and I don't know but I am. I know I would like to go down there pretty well. Mira has had a very sore foot for about a week, a stone bruise I guess, just broke this morning. She did not sleep much last night. She has wore shoes all summer, until her school was out. It is so very warm I let her go bare footed, but I shall keep her shoes on after this. I went into the kitchen just now, found Carrie trying to build a fire. I asked her what she was building fire for. She said to bake her bread. Come to look a round, she had a tin full of dough mixed up ready to bake. So you can see what a mischief she is. Dennis has sent money for his wife to come out here. I expect she will be here next week. Did you ever see her. What kind of a woman is she. Now I must tell you how nice my plants are, those that are rooted. I never saw any thing grow so fast. I only saved one Fuchia, that is a double one. Three Geraniums and one Bogonia died. I think I done well saving so many of them. I think every thing of them. Have you got any monthly roses and that Hydrangia that Mother used to have. I would like some of those right well. I wish if you see Den's wife before she starts you would send me some more fuchias and roses and any thing else that you have got, that is if you can just as well as not. If you will tell me what kinds of fuchias you have got I will send you some different kinds. I am agoing to

send Mother a lot of plants, but I will root them first and get them ready to send next month. They have lots of air plants here, that live hanging up any where by watering them once in a while. Tell me if you have any.

We had a grand old celebration here the fourth, lots of fun. There was a crowd of men, nearly a hundred of them dressed in all kinds of costumes and all wore false faces, the most ridiculous faces you can imagine. Some had noses six inches long, such horrid dresses all colors and shapes, some horse back, some in old carts with their horse legs dressed in old pants. One horse had blue overalls on his fore legs and brown ones on his hind legs and in an old skeleton buggy sat an old couple man and woman. They had an old satchel strapped to the back of the buggy. They looked as tho they were taking lots of comfort. The old woman had an old palm leaf fan fanning her self. They were a comical looking couple. When they passed by the door, I sat at the window, and the old woman kept making bows to me, made five or six. I did not know who it was. I knew it was a man dress in woman's clothes. I did not make any bows back to such a horrid looking old hag. But I had a mind to make up a wry face at her for bowing to me. Come to find out it was Charles dressed up in that style. Then I wish I had made up a horrid face at him. Next time I see him I am agoing to call him Grandma. They made lots of fun.

I did not see All's folks the fourth. I heard that the Grangers had a picnic on Truax Prairie about two miles from here, so I suppose they went there. They belong to the Grangers. I will send Father some papers next week. Well no more this time. I will send the letter I wrote four week ago, along with this. Write soon as you get this.

August 2nd, 1876

Dear Sister,

I thought I would write you a few lines this morning to let you know how we all prosper. I have not been very well for two weeks, could not sit up when Den's wife got here, but am about now. Rissia got here week ago last Saturday morning, was delayed twenty four hours on the way. She got on the wrong road to start with, and had to go back a ways, missed connection in Ohio, had to stop over night. I have not seen her long enough yet to get well acquainted. Den hires her board on the North Side and she went right to her boarding place as soon as she got here. They came over the next day Sunday but I was to sick to visit. Then she did not stay long. Those plants were so dry and wilted I guess I shant make many of them live. She was so long upon the way. They are getting ready to go to housekeeping. Their box of goods came last week.

Charley's folks are well as usual. Mary comes over here

quite often. She was here day before yesterday to take me out riding, but I did not feel well enough to go. Almon's folks I don't see any more, have not seen Lizzie since last March. I expect they don't like us very well, but I don't know of any reason why they should not. We never laid a straw in their path, and never had any words with them. Lizzie is all carried away with Spiritualism, Free Love, and water cure. If any of her folks are sick all the medicine she uses is water. She goes out among her neighbors where ever they will have her and doctors with water. And she thinks she can cure any kinds of disease. She says she can cure Father Spaulding. She told Jeff so to and Almon told him that Father did not have any care at home. That made me pretty mad I tell you. I told Charley's wife that All did not know any thing, and Lizzie was almost a fool. You know all the property Almon has got is in Lizzie's hands. Well the Eau Claire Lumber Co sued Almon for a debt they had against him, and got a judgment of one hundred and twenty dollars. They levied upon some of his cows and some other things, and Lizzie came down and replevied them. They had a lawsuit upon it, and Lizzie swore that all Almon had was his board and clothes for the work he done. They asked her if that was all she kept him for. I expect they made lots of fun of her by what I hear. They have not been to Mary's for a year. They don't visit any one unless some old spiritualist or free love. Lizzie's old mother is sick and



suffers for the want of care. She went to see her mother once or twice and put her in a cold water pack and liked to have killed her, and Lizzie won't go near her at all. The old lady was down to Charley's the Fourth. She cried like a baby when she was talking about her children. She said they were all agoing crazy. I think when they talk of Fathers not having good care they had better look nearer home. I'd see myself pretty sick before I'd have her doctor me. Well I guess you will think I am crazy at this rate so I'll write about something else. I expect every day to hear that they have sold and left for Florida via Yorkstate.

We are having awful hot weather here now. I expect Mrs. Vinton will start for home next week. I would like to go to if I could. Jeff has got his other place back. Got a Sheriffs deed of it. So he has both places now. He is at work up by the bridge building a wagon shed. Well Birdie I must stop and send Mira to the office with this. Tell Mrs. Foskit I am very much obliged for those plants she sent me. Tell Mother two of my Dahlies are in blossom, a pink and a red one. Those little double white flowers are a perfect beauty. I counted one hundred a fifty buds and blossoms on that root she sent to me. What is the name of those plants. She sent me first the one with a green leaf with a white stripe through the center, and that fragrant one that has white

around the edge of the leaf, and that plant that had blossom like phlox. Mira and Carrie says tell Aunt Birdie to pick them up lots of pretty buttons for them to put on their string and have Mrs. Vinton bring them back with her. No more this time. Now write soon as you get this. Mary expects Cousin Ellen Rowe up to make her a visit.

From Ellen

To Bertha

[In Jeff's handwriting:]

Tell Adie that she ought to had a boy. There is enough girls in the family now. Our next will be a boy.

Jeff

I don't think All will sell for he wants to mutch. I can sell bouth of my farms any time.

Jeff

Eau Claire, Oct 12th, 1876

Dear Sister,

I thought I would write you a few lines just to let you know that we have not forgotten how to write, and I'll bet you have. This finds us all well as usual. The girls are both at school, and Jeff went with the band down to Augusta to play yesterday. Last night they played for a dance there, will be back this afternoon if they don't play there to day. They are holding a Fair now. I suppose you have seen Charley

Miller by this time. He left here for home, one week ago Tuesday. I guess he got pretty homesick. Asa wrote that Father had got home and we would like to know how he is, for we have not heard one word from him since he left here. Tell Father that William Spaulding came to Madison the week that he left here, that he or Amos or both of them wrote to him. Charles got the letter. Charles and Mary went down to Madison on a visit a week ago last Saturday and staid three days, said they had a good time. I have only seen Mary once since she got back and then only a few minutes. So I can't write any particulars about the folks down there. But she said William was agoing right back to California and if they had waited a week later they would not have seen him. He has rented the hotel for a year, that is the Capitol House. I suppose he owns it. Amos is quite smart, does business all the time, but his eyes are very bad, has to wear glasses all the time. Mary said they went all over the City, saw Thorp's residence and visited the Insane Asylum. I suppose Charles will write Father all the news when he writes to him. Mary and I made up our minds we would give Father a good scolding when we did hear from him. We visited the Post Office night and day to get a line from him and not a word did we get. I have seen Almon once since Father left. They have not sold yet. We have had a cold wet disagreeable fall until now. This month so far has been warm through the day and cold freezing nights.

It makes me think of home, Mother's nice feather beds and woolen sheets. I have got some quilting to do yet this fall, and I wish you were here to help me. Ida was over here last week. She has got four music scholars now taking lessons of her. It makes her feel independent now I tell you. She says she will learn Mira for nothing.

Mrs. Vinton was over here Sunday night, wanted to know if I had heard from Father. Now you tell him he must write to us and let us know how his health is. We think of moving but have not found a good house yet. There is lots of houses we can get but they are no better than this one. Well Birdie I must stop for now. I told Mira to come home at half past eleven so to take this to the office. Tell Mother I got those papers. Next time I will write more news. They are having great excitement over election now. They have a torch light procession every night with the band. It looks nice I tell you. Be sure and write soon, and a long letter. No more for Mira has come and waiting. Give my love to all the folks. Tell Adda to have her picture her husband and baby's and send to me.

Ellen

April 29, 1877

Dear Mother and Sister,

It has been a long time since we received your letter. I

waited some time to see Almon before I wrote to you, and then I did not get any satisfaction from him about what Uncle Frank said. Lizzie said she did not wonder that Mother thought Almon had forgotten her for he had not written to her since he got back, but she said she was agoing to sit down and write Mother a long letter when she got to Uncle Frank's, and she would tell her all about it. So I suppose you have heard from them before now. I hear that they are very much pleased with Illinois. She did not blame Al for being sick of Nois after seeing that place. I have been waiting to see what the prospect for my coming home would be, so to tell you. But Jeff has not sold out yet, but expect to every week. I suppose you have seen Jim since he got home. We have not heard from him. I presume Len's folks have. We have not seen them since he left. We are all well as usual. But the baby has got a hard cold. He grows awful fast. I bet you never see such a nice plump baby brought up on a bottle as he is. He has got one tooth cut through. Mary was over one day last week. She had awful sore eyes, said she was afraid of infirmation in the eyes, have not heard from her since. Charles and Ida and Susie have all joined the church this winter. Mary joined the church a year ago. I don't know but it more than a year ago. I have forgotten. They had the greatest revival here this winter that ever was held in the Northwest. They had over four hundred converts on this side of the river, and then they held their meeting on the east side in

Music Hall. They had forty converts in one night. Sam Wilkins says there is too much of that G--dam Cartrite in Ida and Susie to make them good Christians.

We are having an early Spring. Farmers have got their grain most in. Friday it commenced to rain and turned in to a snow storm, snowed all day yesterday and to day, but it is warm. If Jeff sells his land and buys a couple of lots in town, I want to come down there and stay while he builds a house. He is at work for the Co now and will stay there all summer. I am bound to go home this summer if it is possible.

Now Mother I will pay two hundred dollars on the mortgage if the other girls will, and you must not worry about your business. You will see that you will get along just as well to go slow and let them wait until you can pay. There is not any one that will crowd you. I have been thinking that maybe Almon will try to get that note off Uncle Frank. I understand that Father gave his note. I don't know as Uncle would let him have it, but they are there and if they agree and get along all right, Al may make a turn and take it up. Almon took Uncle Frank's place for three years if they agree. He rented his farm to Will Stevens, his brother in law, sold his cows and team. I don't suppose they will write to me. In fact I never asked them to. I will have to stop writing for the girls want to send their letter with mine. Now Mother I want you to write to me again. I shant excuse you from writing any more. If I

had thought you could write such a good letter and write plain, I would like to have you write often. I will write more often than I have lately. Well Birdie we have not named our baby yet. We like the name of Dewitt but not Edson. We have thought of calling him Addison Dewitt and call him Addie but we can't decide upon any name yet. Write to us as soon as you get this and let us know how you get along. Do you make sugar this Spring, and tell me all the news. Give my love to Maranda and all the rest. The girls have had their letters written ever since we got your letter and Carrie's got awful dirty. So she thought she would copy it and she has made it look about as bad as the first one. She can write real good but she has written with a book in her lap and it don't look very nice. Well I commenced this Sunday and if I don't send it off pretty soon you won't get it this Summer.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Wis., June 27th [1877]

Dear Mother an Sisters,

I received your card an also the box all right. Many thanks for them. They are all growing but the fuchias. I could not make them live. I am agoing to send Mother some after the Fourth. I want to get a spotted lily for her. I wish I knew if Mother had a white double fuchia (white center) and scarlet outside. I have one. I thought I would not send

any fuchias. Mother has so many kinds. But I could send ever so many kinds, the dwarf one the flowers about one inch long. Write and tell me.

I can't write much to night for it is almost dark now and I want to send this out. I have been washing to day and am very tired. We have been alone all this week. Jeff went up the river to the upper dam to work, he be gone all the week. He wanted me to send you the baby's pictures. Last Sunday after I got him washed and dressed, he put him in the carriage, said he was going a little walk. I supposed he was going up to Den's and thought no more about. Then in a little while he came back with these two pictures. I was so provoked I wanted to pound him. He had nothing but his every day dress on. I asked him why he didn't comb his hair, said he did run his fingers through it. The one in the chair looks just like him when he is mad, and he was mad because Jeff took him out of his carriage. They are not good pictures, but Jeff wanted me to send them. Keep the one you like best and let Mother Miller have the other. In a few weeks I will send you some better ones. All well. Write soon, a long letter, all the news.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Feb 24th, 1879

Dear Mother and Sisters,



It has been such a long time since I wrote to you. I hardly know what to write about. Carrie wants to know how many years it is since I wrote, and I tell her I can't remember whether it is one or two. But to begin with we are all well now. Carrie and the baby have just got over the chicken pox. Mira had it first. Carrie had it very bad. You would think she had the small pox she broke out so bad. We are all alone. Jeff is in the woods this winter, went before Christmas. He never has been before, and he likes it first rate. Charley has been up there twice this winter. He said Jeff was as fat as a bear. We look for him home about the tenth of March. We have had some pretty cold weather here this winter, and no snow until about a week ago. There is about six inches of snow now and good sleighing. It is quite warm to day and snowing a little.

I have not seen Mary since just before Christmas. She was here one afternoon. She is doing her own work and that is her excuse for not coming over. Oh yes: Ida has got a fellah. He is from Minneapolis and his father is worth millions and millions of dollars. He came down and spent New Year's Day at Charley's, and reports says they are engaged to be married. But that is something I don't know any thing about, and what is more I don't want to know. I have not heard a word about All and Lizzie for a long time. I heard once that they were coming up here on a visit and that Uncle and Aunt were coming with

them. Then I heard again that Uncle Frank and his wife were very poorly, and Lizzie said she would not be surprised if Aunt was taken away at any time. That is the report I heard. They have not written to me since they went away. I wish you would tell me what Uncle Frank's wife name is. I can't never remember her name. I got Bertha's letter in November, and we were just about to move. The man sold his house and lot and the one that bought it wanted to move right in. So we had to find another house. We found one close by so we did not have to move far. I put off writing on that account and then I thought I never could get at it. But now I want you to write to me as soon as you get this and I will answer it immediately. I want to hear from you often. Tell me if Aunt Eliza is married again. I heard she was. A fellow came here last fall, that used to work for Uncle Nick Angle. He went to work of the Co and went to the woods this winter. I did not see him or hear what his name was. But Jeff said he knew him East but could not remember his name. Den's wife has had very poor health this winter. The doctors say she has the consumption very bad. She had a bad spell once this winter, and the Doc said he wouldn't be surprised if she did not live a week. But she got better, was down here a week ago, and was feeling real well.

Is Martha Angle at home now and how does Grandpa and Grandma get along. Why don't Maranda write to me. Oh dear I wish I could get a letter every week. I suppose Addie and

Oscar think they have got the smartest boy, but it can't beat mine. I tell you he talks every thing. I am agoing to send you his picture in a week or two and mine with it. Did you ever get those pictures we send last fall. You never told me. It has been very sickly here this last fall and winter among the children. They talked of closing the public schools. The Scarlet fever, Diphtheria, Croup, measles, chicken pox and most every other disease that children have is in the school.

Well I have filled one sheet and I think I will stop for this time. I most forgot to tell you I have kept my house plants without freezing so far this winter. And every body that I have seen this winter says to me my plants are all frozen, but I keep a fire all night when it is very cold. We have nice hard wood. We pay \$2½ dollar a cord for hardwood. I had a caller this afternoon that I was very glad to see, Mrs. Miley, Eliza Connel's sister. I have not seen her before in five years and she lives on this side. Eliza made me one visit last fall when she came to the City. She heard I lived on the north side so she found me out. She lives on a farm about fifteen miles from here. She has got three children all boys. She told me to tell Birdie to write to her. I have been making bed comforters. I made one last week and put five pounds of cotton in it and tied it, and Carrie says its just lovely. Now Mother I want you to write to me, and make the girls write. I think I shall come home before many more months.

We are getting along now the best we have for a long time, but we have had so much sickness, especially myself, and it has been such hard times that I used to get about discouraged. We just had a letter from Jim Miller. He wants a get back here again but has not got money to come with. And he wanted Jeff to send him enough, but I thought if Jeff had enough for him to come out here with, it would take me home before he got it, but don't tell them I wrote it back, for it would make them feel hard towards me. And you know they don't like me any to well now. But I must stop and go to bed for it is late, so good night.

I will send you our last Eau Claire paper but there is not much that is interesting in it. Good bye. Write soon.

From Ellen

Eau Claire, July 18th [1879]

Dear Mother,

I suppose if I hear from any of you again, I will have to do some writing myself. We are all well and enjoying the best of health. Charley's folks are well. Ida and Susie are at Minneapolis on a visit, have been gone three weeks. Uncle Frank, Aunt, Lizzie and Marcella are up here on a visit, came week ago last Friday. They are only going to stay two weeks. Uncle and Aunt are quite smart and Lizzie is fat as ever. We were very much surprised when they came for we expected them

in June and Lizzie wrote they was not coming. I guess she did not want them to come and they were bound to come any way. I hear that Uncle Frank was very much disappointed in the people here. I suppose Lizzie had praised up her folks, and run us down, so that he expected to find something altogether different from what he did. They visited her mother and Anro Stevens, out in the country. They came to see me Monday. Then Tuesday they went out there and staid until Friday. They came to my house and staid all night, that is Uncle and Aunt. Yesterday afternoon we went down to Charley's. Lizzie said she would come and stay one night and I want Uncle and Aunt to stay one more night with me. Now Mother you must write to Uncle Frank. He told me he invited you up there to visit them but he had not heard from you since, so I told him what you said about going. I think they are two of the nicest old people I ever met. They are agoing to stop at Madison to visit William and Amos's wife. You know Amos is dead, the one that got hurt so bad.

I suppose you have heard by this time what a flood we had here in June. The Eau Claire and Chippeway Rivers never was known to be so high before. We had so much rain this spring. Then it rained about four days steady. About three hundred family had to move on the account of the water and some houses and barns went down the river. Our large carriage bridge over the Chipaway went down the river. We have to cross the river on a ferry boat, to the west side. All around where we

used to live on the west side was just a lake of water and saw logs floated through the streets, and where we lived on this before we moved here, the lower part of the house was full of water clear up to the top of the front door. I tell you I was glad I lived up on high ground about that time. We saw mills, barns, bridges, rafts and millions of logs float down the river. Some lost all of their goods. We saw a nice sofa float down the river with a kitten upon it, and chickens on the logs and pigpens with live pigs in them. We used to think we had big floods in the East, but when these large rivers get high, it is an awful sight. I saved some papers to send to you that had an account of the flood. They are a month old, but I will send them with this letter. Tell Birdie I would like to have her come out here and stay awhile, but not to work out for the hired girls in this country are not thought so much of as those in the East, for a poor girl that works out is just nobody among the big bug. They are not allowed to eat at the same table with the family. Where is Addie now, and how are Aff's folks. Write and tell me if you know where Uncle Curt Lazelle folks are. I heard a long time ago that Rina was dead. Have you heard so. No more this time. I will write again when Uncle Frank's folks go home. Now write to me as soon as you get this. Tell me how you are all getting along. Good bye. Did you get some papers Mira sent to you.

Ellen

August 2d

You will by the date of my letter that I have been some time writing it. We are all well at this time. Aunt was quite sick when they started for home. I have not heard from them yet. Lizzie's brother wife and two children went home with them. Ida and Susie came home the night they left here, so they did not see them. Write soon.

Ellen

Eau Claire, Oct 15th [1879]

Dear Mother and Sister,

I received your letter last night, and hasten to answer it. I am ashamed of myself for not writing before but I am agoing to do better after this. We are all well at this time. The children have all been having the Diptheria this fall. Carrie and Bugie were two pretty sick children for a little while. There has been lots of that desease here, and is now. The family that live the next door had four children sick with it and burried three of them inside of four weeks. We have had lots of rain here. It has rained continually since August. The papers stated to day that from the 10th of August to Oct 14th there were 65 days, and out of this number it rained on 41 days, leaving 24 days on which it did not rain. And it has raised these rivers up awful high. The Eau Claire River has been on a big tare, washed out both foot bridges, lots of piers,

booms, docks and undermined one end of the Ned Bridge so that it settled almost into the water. If the logs in the dam above here had broken loose, they would have taken out every bridge on these rivers, and mills to. The mills are all stoped on the account of high water, but it is going down now. It is clearing off to night. Perhaps we will have a fair day to morrow. I think we will have a frost to night. It is quite cold.

Jeff has gone to play for a dance to night. Mira has got a bean, and Carrie is bobbing around here and there all over the house. Buge has gone to sleep. Charley's folks are all well. Mary was here last week. Ida is not married yet. Mary said she would have been married last Spring only for her. She said Ida was not strong. Her lungs were very bad. I guess she is strong enough. I guess she could not get the feller she tried to, but she has got another one now, lives up at Minneapolis too. He was down to see her last week. I suppose he has got lots of dimonds. I have never seen him, but I hear that he is a young green looking fellow, don't look half as old as Ida. Susie goes to school all of the time. I guess she has got a pretty good education. I got your picture last Spring, was very much pleased with it. Did Orra Wells leave any family. He was own cousin to Den's wife. How long had they been married. Was she Zal Smith's youngest girl.

We live in one of the Co red houses, No 7, where we have been living our two years. Jeff is driving team the same as



usual, and he has got a handsome team to, I tell you. They like to run away every chance they can get, but they have never got away from Jeff yet. We keep our cow and chickens, but we sell all of the milk, keep only enough for our own use. We have to pay high prices for farm products. The rain has spoilt lots of wheat, whole stacks being totally ruined. Flour is four dollars a hundred, potatoes 70 cts a bushel, rutabaga 40 cts a bushel, butter 30 cts a pound, eggs 25 cts a doz. So you can see that it don't cost much to live. Now about those pictures. If I don't send them before long, I shall come and bring them for I think I have stayed away from home about long enough. Carrie is about crazy to go to Grandma's, talks about it all of the time. Jeff said tell Birdie he knows there is one man that she don't think is a nuisance, and he know who that is too. Well I have written a long rambling letter and got to the end of my paper and will have to stop. Write again as soon as you get this. Let us know how you are. Sorry to hear you were sick. Love to all.

Ellen

[In the margins:]

Charley had a letter from Almon, don't know what he wrote, nor how they were. I have not heard a word from them.

Where does Maranda and Af live. Did they sell their place, and is Martha living in St. Paul yet. Who did Lida marry. You never told me.

Note: The following three letters are fragments that do not fit with any of the others.

[No date]

Sister Bertha I have got in to a bad scrape. You know I said that my farm was not for sale but I think I have got to sell it or back out. The other day a lumber man asked me if I wanted to sell. I told him I would take two thousand dollars for it. He wanted to know my term of payment. I told him cash down. He said it was a big price. I did not think any more about it until yesterday. He told me about the same as today it is a trade. Come to find out it is just such a place as he wants for a lumbering farm for pastuer and to raise timothy hay for his camps in winter. I think I shall not let it go. I am all most shure that I can get that price for it if I am a minto. The first thing I know it will be worth double that.

Jeff

Well I thought strange Jeff had not written any thing about his farm, but I knew he would have to say some thing about it before he got done writing. But I don't intend he will sell that piece of land. He may talk it all he is a mind to.

We are having some beautiful weather here now, warm and pleasant.

Mira was much pleased with the piece of your dress. I will have to send you some pieces of our dresses tho we have

not had any very nice ones this winter. I will send you a ball ticket. They had large Masquerade Ball here a week ago last Friday night. Well Birdie I think I have written enough for one letter. So I will close by saying good bye for this time. From Ellen.

Tell Addie I don't think it will hurt her to write once in a while.

I will send Father our last paper.

[1872]

farm this Spring or not.

The children were very much pleased with those papers you send, and Carrie thinks just as much of getting a paper from you as Mira does. When I read your letter to Mira about the lambs, she said let us go right off down there.

We have not had very cold weather this month. To day it is warm and the snow is melting fast. There is not any sleighing here now. Once in a while we see a sleigh go past. Tell Mother it is about time she was looking over her flower seeds for I want her to send me some of all the kinds of flowers she has got. I let an old lady a friend of mine have the seeds I brought with me. She sowed them last spring but it was so dry, but few of them came up. I would like some of those cabbage seed that Mother

[In the margin] I don't know whether Lizzie got her book.

I have not seen them.

had, when I came away. There is a very large garden spot with this house, large enough to raise our living, and the rent is not very high. We have not paid any rent for this house since we lived here because they never asked us for any. Now Mary tells the neighbors they are agoing to have rent for it this summer or set it a fire. I pity the one that rents it.

Where is Net Foskit and her husband. Have they gone to Boston to set up in business. How does Penny get along.

Tell Father that we are living in an incorporated City. The City is five miles long up and down the River and three miles wide and is divided into six wards. Tomorrow is their first City Election. We are looking for Mr. Vinton and Mr. Merriman, in April. They are comming out here to live. Mr. Vinton wrote to us that he went to see Father after he left us. They made me some nice presents when they went home. One presented me with a silver butter knife and the other a set of silver plated teaspoons. Well Birdie I think I have written enough for this time. Tell Addie not to cry because I did not write to her, and I will cut her a paper doll with my big shears.

Ellen to Bird

Tell Father I have sent him an Eau Claire paper. We take the paper now so I will send him one every week or two.

I want Mother to send me some house plant a monthly rose, Hydrangea, and some slips off all her plants, that if she has any plants rooted send them along. If she send slips send two or three of a kind so I will be sure to get some started. Send me some of that myrtle that you had in a box that had dark green leaves, some of all kinds of Fuchias, and be sure to send some monthly rose and Hydrangea I want them expressed through. Get a small square box. Put the plants in wet moss with a little moss around them. Nail some strips across the top and let the plants stick up between the slats. That gives them plenty of air. Be sure and wrap them tight with wet moss. Tell Father to get the box expressed through. I will pay all express charges myself. Send it so I can get it next week. Mrs. Charley Spaulding can keep her Gladiolus for all I care when I get some plants from home. Tell Addie to send me some of her old hens and chickens she had when I came away. Any kind of house plants will be acceptable. I guess Mother will begin to think my wants are numerous. It seems as tho house plant are quite a rarity here. Those that have any are very choice of them. There is a woman lives just across the street in that stone house has got a large monthly rose bush. But oh my she would not slip it for any body.

Has Albert got back and how did he like the country down

there. Write and tell me all the news. I have not written much news to day for I can't seem to think what to write about. We have a great deal of rain here. But not any too much, for the ground was so dry. Crops look nice, and I guess the potatoe bugs are not so thick as they were last year or at least I don't hear so much about them.

Charles is with the Company yet and every thing goes on about as usual. Mr. Vinton and Mr. Merriman have come here to live. They rent an office up town and have gone into business in good style. You will see their advertisement in the paper. I guess I will stop writing. I never made so many blunders, blots and mistakes in writing as I have in this letter.

You must write often to me. Tell me how Father's broken leg is getting along. Tell Maranda I am a going to write to her soon. Jeff has commenced to write two or three letters to all and then wait for me to finish them. They would lay around until they got so old. Then he would burn them up. We have not heard a word from Jeff folks. We got a few lines from Asa's wife. Soon after you wrote to me that he was gone. She wanted to know if he was here and to let her know if we had heard from him. We sent a letter back to her the same day to tell her we had not seen or heard a word from him, and wanted her to write back to us the particulars, but have not heard from any of them since. No more this time.

From Ellen

To Birdie and Addie

Note: The following two letters were written by Carrie and Mira.

Dear Grandma,

We are all well and I hope this will find you the same. The baby is full of fun to night. The baby slept all day and he is as good as a little kitten. Mira is playing with the baby to night. The baby he laughs right out loud. How is birdie. Tell her that I like thoes cards very well. Ellen is well. Uncle jim has come down from the woods to day. Jeff is making perperation to buy a knitting machine. I think it is all nonsense. Don't you.

[In Ellen's handwriting: Send me some everlasting flower seeds all kinds that you have.]

Ellen cried when she red your letter. Our baby is as fat as a little pig. Jeff smoke every day. I do not go to school. Now I am piecing blocks. I think we will come down to your house by next May.

[In Ellen's handwriting:]

Carrie says she don't want to write any more. Birdie if you have got any flower seeds to spare, send me some if you get time, so if I don't get some until fall I can have my flowers. I saved a good many seeds last fall but they got wasted when I was sick. I have got a different kind of princess feather, that I never saw East. I will send you a few seeds. Now write as soon as you get this, and I will answer soon.

Eau Claire, March 29, 1877

Dear Bertha,

We are all well and hope this will find you the same. We had got a cunning little baby brother. Carrie thought she would write a little bit. I was twelve years old the twelfth of March. When you write to me send me a piece of your hair and Grandma to. I will send you my card and Carrie to and I will send you to of my all right. I am not going to school. Just now I cand half write for Carrie is making so much noise but she has just gone away to stay a half of an hour. Well I cant think of anything so good. Write soon.

From Mira to Bertha S.

[In Ellen's handwriting:] Mira thought she would send you some of her school cards. Then she made up her mind to wait and send you something better.

[In Mira's handwriting:] Well Bertha this has laid around the house a long time. When you write to me, write to me separate because I want to keep \_\_\_\_\_. I was in Miss E. Denison room in the Second Reader but now I am in Third Reader in a nother room, have been to school every day this term. Hattie S. Brooks maid me a present of a card cose did none make those cards. I have wrote two times.

Note: The following two letters were written by Almon Spaulding and his wife, Mary E. Spaulding ("Lizzie").



Eau Claire, Jan 29

Dear Father and Mother,

Your letter is at hand. We were all well and glad to hear that Mother was getting better. I was out all night to a party and I feel like a fool. I will come out all right when I get my regular sleep. Mary and I was down town yesterday and went to Jeff's. Ellen was well, but the children have got a bad cold. Little Charley has been sick but has got better. Jeff is driving team yet. Charley is in the same place as when you were here. You have got apples and cider in the cellar and I have got potatoes and turnips, so you can't get the start of me much. Tell Addie and Birdie that I would like to take them out riding with my black horses. The snow is about 12 inches deep. Up to the 1st day of Jan, the snow was about 4 inches deep. We have had one cold snap and it lasted 3 or 4 days and the rest of the time has been warm. I must give Mary room to write.

Wheat	is worth	\$1.00
Corn	" "	75 c
Oats	" "	50 c
Rye	" "	60 c
Potatoes	"	\$1.00
Beans	" "	2.50

From Your Son Almon

[In Mary's handwriting:] Almon says he must give room

for Mary. I don't suppose he could send a letter without I wrote some in it. At any rate I don't intend to let him, because I like to write as well as talk. But I guess I shant make out much for Almon sits at my left hand and keeps tormenting me. He is as full of the old nickal as ever. Mother do you remember the story he told you about the cucumber. We were all glad to hear of Mother's returning health. Ellen was very anxious to hear from home. She thinks she isn't used well because you don't write to her more often. She thinks Addie might write any way. You must write to Ellen anyway. I am afraid she will get homesick if you don't. It cheers her up to hear from home. She has worried a great deal about Mother's being sick. Finally we all like to hear from home. As for me I allways like to write but since you were out here it seems as though I could not wait to hear from you. So do write often. In the spring I would like some of Mother's bulbs and flower seeds, and some of those early rose potatoes. They could be sent by freight without a great deal of expense. The express would be 8 cts per pound. But I shall have to close or get a new sheet of paper. Give my love to all of the friends. Write to us all about Miranda and family. Good night and pleasant dreams. This from your children.

Almon and Mary

To Father and Mother

Dear Absent Parents,

As Almon is determined I shall write in this letter, I will be at it. I hardly think I can write any thing interesting to you. But Almon will not be satisfied unless I write. It is always a pleasure to write to you, but there is always a hesitation accompanied with pleasure for fear I shall not interest you much. Almon has written to you the reason of our selling out the mill. He would not have told you any thing about it if you had not have inquired about it on Charley's account. But it is perfectly right you should know for probably there isn't any one who feels the interest in his welfare that you feel. I can tell you it was quite a loss to us. We had been but little over five years married and had a good start in business. You know that with beginners in life, the loss of a few hundred dollars makes quite a drawback. When we were first married, we were in debt some two hundred dollars on his first farm. But we cleared that the first summer, and some left besides. We have always tried to live within our income and you know that people do not loose a great deal who do that. But when any one gets in company with one who does not, it sometimes gets the most economical entangled in a failure. But thanks to a kind Providence we did not loose all. We have something left to start anew and I think that the future partnership business will be A.W. Spaulding and wife. I think it the most reliable firm. We have a very good farm and farming

and gardening is quite a paying business. I will give you some of our last summer prices of garden productions in Eau Claire 2 miles from here. Green peas 60 cts pr peck in the pod, string beans the same, summer squash 10 cts apiece, pie plant 25 cts pr pound, green corn  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cts per dozen ears, early potatoes 2.00 per bu, strawberries 25 cts per quart. So you see that there is something to be made in gardening. We have a new house 16 X 24 finished on our place and I enjoy living on a farm. I was not brought up on a farm. My father being a mechanic brought us up in town. But I have all the accomplishments necessary to a farmer's wife. I know how to milk, make butter and cheese, cook a good boiled dinner. Yes, and make good soft soap.

Almon say tell father I was elected Justice of the Peace in this town. Esq hardly fits well to his youthful look. Although past 30 years, he looks about 22. But I fear I have already wearied your patience with this letter. I will draw it to a close by wishing you all a happy New Year and with an earnest desire that you will write soon and write more often. Subscribe myself your absent daughter.

Mary E. Spaulding

P.S. Why don't Ellen and Jeff write. They owe us a letter. We wrote to them some time ago but have received no answer. And those younger sisters write to your sister in Wis and I will answer at every time.

We all join in love to all. Gortie say he would like to see Lranpa Pauldin.

Note: The following two letters were written by Jeff after Ellen's death. She died sometime between 1880 and 1885.

Eau Claire, May 19th

Dear Sister Bertha,

I am so glad that you wrote to me for it has let in a little light where it was looking dark. I have heard so many storys about the poor boy. One is that Mother Spaulding is a goin to throw him on the town and a good deal more. One thing certain, you people there do not understand the situation here as well as I do. The trouble is hard times and no sines of being better. Two thousand men in this city out of employment. Those that are at work can not get mutch for it. I am not at work, was laid off last fall, and this spring have not worked half the time. In the last six months the rest of the time have had to hire board and when poor Ellen was taken away, it cost so mutch that I could not get out of debt untill about the time of the flood. And since that time I have not had work, so it is no wonder that I am hard up. Another thing that I am shure of. I am not to blame for it. I may have made mistakes in past years but in this I have done the best I could. I am now living in hopes of better times. I sent Carie a little money a month ago to get the boy some cloes, suposed she done

it. If I could get what C. Wm. Spaulding owes me, I would be all right, but I never expect to get it. Ellen had given up getting anything of him. We trusted his honesty, have found out to our sorrow how honest he is. I could tell you lots if I was a minto.

Yes the boy should go to school and look like somebody, for he is as good and smart as any other boy of his age. And I am the only one whom it belongs to to suport him. I am fully aware of all of the facts in this matter. I understand some have said that I sent them down there to get rid of suporting them. I never thought of such a thing. It was to get them in better company, to get Bugie out of town, and get Carie away from a low Irish dish.that she was runing with. Girls that work out here don't have many friends. I should have kept house right along but it did not look so at the time. Another thing, how could I leave them children winters alone in this town. It is a bad mess but will be better sometime I hope. Poor Ellen. How I miss her. It seems unjust to take her a way from the children. Did Mother Spaulding get the dispatch I sent her and about what time a day. Every thing was done that could be for her. That disease take them all if it gets a hold of them. I did not know she had Pnemonia untill a few hours before she died. Oh I could tell you lots if I could see you.

Do you want the boy and why did Em take him a way from

you. Write to me at once and let me know. I think you have as good a rite to him as any one. Asa does not want him. He only would take him if it was necessary. I think he was ashamed of him. He is not big enough to pick up stones, nor I won't have it any longer. Say nuthing but I am a goin to have him a way from there.

I will try and get hold of some papers to show you how times is here. And if any one says that I don't care for the children or that I am trying to get married, tell them they are L F. Nothing makes memadder.

Jeff

Sterling Dec.

Sister Bertha

I received your letter in time but did not write until I got settled for the winter. I am halling logs in mills with four horses for the same company. I was very mutch disipointed to hear that Bugie had not got any shoes yet and I can prove to you that it is not my fault. When Tip Hill was here I wanted him to take some with him for the boy but he did not have the room in his trunk. Vintons made them believe that it was impossible so I told them to let Tip have the money and let Tip get the close. They said they would. And just before he started Tip told me that Vinton said he would send him a P. O. order in two or three days. So I kept watch of the

cash book and found he charged me with cash to Tip Hall six dollars. I supposed then that the Boy would have a little something to wear. I have been hard up all summer but can see my way out now.

I will send you ten dollars in a few days, two weeks at the out side if I live and have my health. And I wish you could see Tip and find out weather he got that money or not. I did not hear from Asa since Tip left here. You can allso find out by him fun times we'r have and how I was \_\_\_\_\_ suit. I know if Tip got the money he would pay it out when he supposed it was all right. There is a screw loos some where. I ought not be blamed for not clothing him when I supposed he was all right. I have sent money twice for him and he did not get a cent of it. What is worst of all is to have him think I do not care for him. I wish I was where I could get a box of stuf for Christmass and send him. I hope you will be kind and good to him and make him think that his PaPa has not forgot his Boy nor any where near it.

Write soon adress

Sterling

Clark Co.

Wis.

P.S. I will have to direct to your Mother for I can't think of your name. Write soon so I will know it next time.

Jeff



Note: The following letter was written by Carrie to her brother, Budgie. Carrie came to see Mira in Eau Claire. Budgie was still in Randolph with Ellen's mother and sisters.

Chippewa Falls Sept 28th/87

Dear brother Budgie

Well Budge do you think I have run away with my self, because I have not written to you before? I haven't. Just the same if you think so but I have been so busy ever since I came, and Mira has been sick so I have not had time to write to any one. (Not even to Cain.) I had quite a pleasant journey and I did not get on the wrong train. Had good luck all the way but was pretty tired when I got here.

Well Budge I have seen Papa. Mira and I was down to Eau Claire last week and he was there. He was rather surprised to see me. I gave him your letter and he said he was going to answer it when he got time. He had just come from up river and he expected to go up again right away. Presume he has gone by this time. Oh: say he is going to send you something but there I dare not tell you what it is because he told me not to. But I seen it. It is awful nice. Papa was all dressed up to beat the dutch. He looked awful nice and he don't drink, chew, nor smoke, so you see that makes him nicer still. Times are dull in Eau Claire now the Eau Claire Lumber Co have sold out and it has thrown hundreds of men out of employment.

Mira has made a pair of shoes for Aunt Birdie's baby and she sent them yesterday. I presume she will have got them by the time you receive this. Mira wants her to write back and tell her how they fit because she is going to make her another pair. Mira thinks her apples and apron is awful nice. Your little nephew is the cutest little fellow you ever saw. He can talk everything. He has got a dog and Charlie says he wouldn't give much for the seat of your pants if you came along here to go to pick that boy up if the dog caught you at it and he surely would because they are always together. Tell Grandma Spaulding that Uncle Wesley's folks has got Ida baby and they think it is the smartest baby that ever was. It made Wesley nearly crazy when she died. She was brought back to Eau Claire and was buried.

Well Budge I guess it is about time I was going to bed. Charlie and Mira has been snoreing for an hour. Tell Aunt Birdie I am going to write to her before long and tell Cora I have not and will not forget her. Give my love to Marcus and all the rest and keep a share for your self. Excuse this pencil as I can't find a pen in this house. Well Budgie good night. Be a good boy and write soon. I remain

Your loving sister

Carrie

Note: The following letter was by Ellen's sister, Bertha ("Birdie"), to an unknown person.

Randolph, April 25th

Willie,

I received your letter last night, was glad that you condescended to write to me, such a little insignificant person as I am. I don't wonder that you did not want to walk up with me from Mr. Foskit's, but never mind. I'll be even with you yet for that, my dear. I was awful sorry that I was not at home Sunday for I wanted to see you awful bad. I came down to go to church but did not go, staid at home all alone, excepting when I was over to the Hotel. Went to evening meeting your Dutch Blessing. You hadn't better be giving me dutch blessings for you know that I can talk as fast as you can. What made you show my letter Sunday. You will get choked the next time I see you. You wanted to know how R-- and I got a long. Well we get a long all right, that Old Fool. You want to shut up a bout him or I'll give you a going over. I won't own you for a brother if you talk about him. You thought that it took me a good while to get mad but it did not. It took me longer to make up my mind to write for mind you it did not take me long to get mad and you know that as well as Ida.

They have all acted like fools since I got that letter. Bell and Maggie have taken it a way from me more than five

times till I suppose they have read the most of it. I am so mad that I can hardly stand it. I feel just like biting some one to night. Wish you were here so that I could give you a raking down. Living in City does not make me feel above any body. So you will hear from me again, though I presume you only put that in your letter (that you would like to hear from me again) just for the looks.

Well I must close and go to studying. Maggie staid with us last night and is here to night. She went up to the Inst. with us to day. Write soon.

From Birdie

To Willie