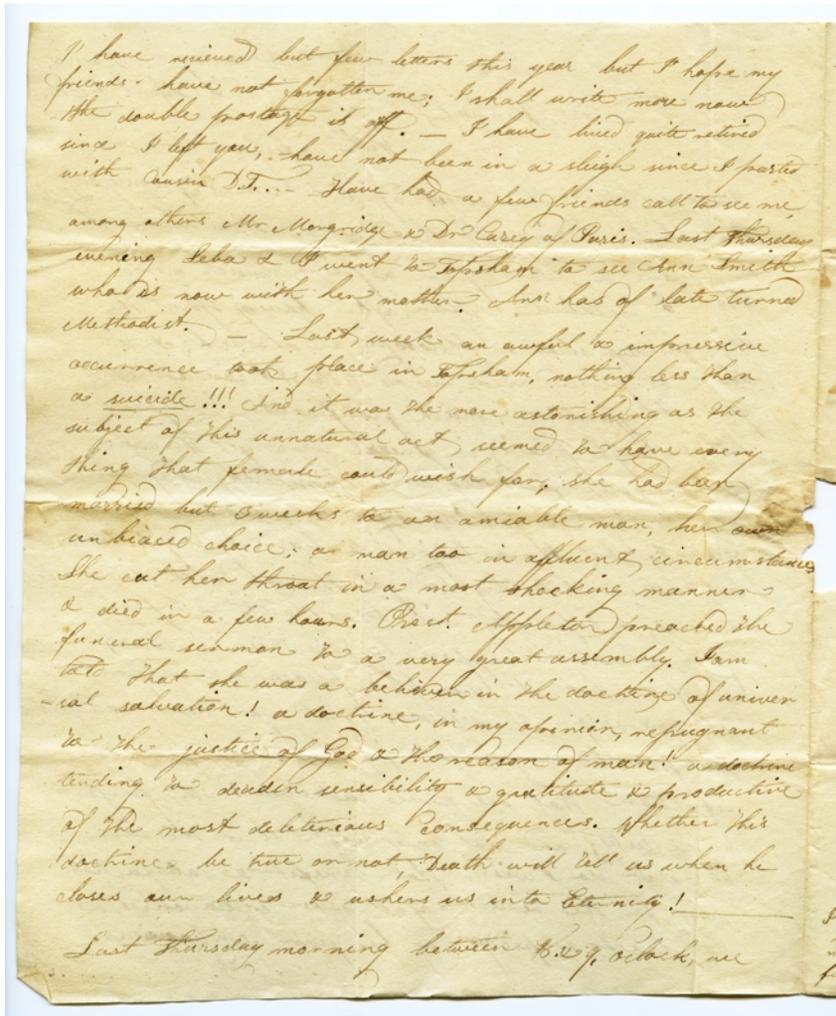


Bowdoin College, Bruns.
April 1: 1816

Dear Hannah,

With unfeigned pleasure I acknowledge the receipt of two letters from you for which I sincerely thank you. I am always glad to receive a letter from a friend, much more from a relative. Often after having spent the day in deep study & philosophical research, I sit down & peruse over my old letters & I can assure you it affords me much gratification. Your letters though pleasing in general were yet the cause of some grief, for they were the messengers of the sickness of our family. I felt anxious on their account; but I was rejoiced to learn by my Father's last letter that they had got through with the measles, I hope they will be as healthy as before. Your school I suppose by this time is closed, I hope that it has been pleasant & useful to yourself & scholars, that you have satisfied the parents, & feel that joy that arises from the reflection that we have endeavour'd to perform our duty; and not only wish it in this case but also do I wish that benefit & satisfaction may be the result of all your endeavours, & that health & piety may be your companions.

Contributed to Maine Memory Network by an individual through
Maine Historical Society
Date: April 1, 1816
Description: Josiah Pierce about suicide victim in Topsham



I have recieved but few letters this year but I hope my friends have not forgotten me; I shall write more now the double postage is off. — I have lived quite retired since I left you, have not been in a sleigh since I parted with Cousin D. T... Have had a few friends call to see me, among others Mr Mongridge & Dr Carey of Paris. Last Thursday evening Seba & I went to Topsham to see Ann Smith who is now with her mother. Ann has of late turned Methodist. — Last week an awful & impressive occurrence took place in Topsham, nothing less than a suicide !!! And it was the more astonishing as the subject of this unnatural act, seemed to have every thing that female could wish for, she had been married but 3 weeks to an amiable man, her own unbiased choice; a man too in affluent circumstances. She cut her throat in a most shocking manner & died in a few hours. Prest. Appleton preached the funeral sermon to a very great assembly. I am told that she was a believer in the doctrine of universal salvation! a doctrine, in my opinion, repugnant to the justice of God & the reason of man! a doctrine tending to deaden sensibility & gratitude & productive of the most deleterious consequences. Whether this doctrine be true or not, death will tell us when he closes our lives & ushers us into Eternity!

Last Thursday morning between 8. & 9. o'clock, we

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had a very heavy shower accompanied with lightning
thunder & hail, I mention this because it is
uncommon at this season of the year. The thunder
was quite heavy. -- Of late I have been reading
the life of Edmund Burke, it is an elegant piece
of biography & set forth the character of that
truly great man in a pleasing manner. Like
Count Rumford Burke owed his advancement
to disappointment in early life. He was profound
brilliant & unaffected, he was easy, sociable &
captivating. -- You express solicitude for my hap-
piness; 'tis true my expectations of the future are
not very high. Happiness I know is ideal, that is,
a great object of our desire, but then it is
not believe according to the evidences in our
minds, therefore I think reason favours the idea
that my prospects are by no means flattering.
Sometimes I sit in my cell ~~alone~~ here, with the genius
of memory on one side of me & that of anticipation
on the other, the former of these looks smiling,
but frowns, that chill the warm blood of expecta-
tion, sit on the brow of the latter. Perhaps you
may think I am hypochondriacal. -- My expenses
here will amount to 50 dols. per term at least. I
recieved 40 at Portland, but I had to expend about 10 for shoes
books, stage fare & so forth, 10 more for my last term bill
& various other expenses have nearly taken all my money, but
I have sold my flute & talk of selling my watch for I have
not the heart to send home for money. Dont think I am very
much cast down. I have too much philosophy for that. I hope this will
find you all well & happy. Recieve & bestow to friends the glad wishes of your
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