

Eben North Letter to Rufus, July 12 (no date)

This is addressed to Rufus North, Colebrook Connecticut, Colebrook Meeting house P.O.

Honored Parents

I received your letter of 28th April some time after date and have neglected to answer it until this time by reason of being engaged in taking the assessment and other business at my farm, which has made a very busy time with me a few weeks back. We are all well here & at present my own health is better than it has been, although I am not very tough yet. I was rather unwell last winter & had another confinement to the house pretty much of the time for about a fortnight, and was not able to labour much [a] good part of the winter. There have been a number of deaths in this town the winter past. Several have died with the consumption. There has been but very few cases of fever nor any contagious disorders. Mr. Avery is dead. Jabez Peck now lies at the point of death with the blind piles. Our spring crops never looked more unpromising since I have been in this country. Spring wheat is struck with a kind of mildew that is likely to destroy the whole. I have about three acres of it on the ground. The new land, 1 ½ acre, looks much better than the old land. I have an acre & a half on the old land, which I think never will be worth harvesting. The lot where my corn was last year, I sowed to peas, flax and spring wheat except an acre, which is planted to corn, which looks well. I have about an acre between the house and road, which looks very well. My flax is wholly eat up by worms, except one small spot that will produce 8 or 10 bundles perhaps. My peas almost all eat up by the worms. The lot by the barn I sowed to oats; they are badly eat & look as if they would never be worth harvesting unless we have rain soon. The season now is very cold & dry. Other people's crops have generally shared the same fate with worms. Noah sowed three bushels of flax seed. The worms have destroyed the whole of it so that he will not have a pound of flax this year. The ground is so completely cleared of the flax that you would not know there had been flax sowed on the ground this year from the appearance. Noah's boys undertook to dig up the worms & count them on a foot square of the ground. They found 116 corn worms on the 12 inches square. Two or three mornings ago he dug 16 out of a hill of beans in his garden, but Noah seems to be more troubled with them than any of the rest of us, although they are making great havoc through the country generally. Fruit was generally destroyed by a frost on the 24 May. There is but very few apples & peaches left. There was the greatest blowth [Strange word, but it is written very clearly. Could he have meant "dearth"?] of fruit that ever was known here. Your orchard blowed here about two thirds of the trees. [?] There is a few apples on some of them now.

My last year's wheat I got thrashed out and let my carpenters have it all (except a few bushels) for building my barn, which was not enough to pay them [the agreed amount], about 15 bushels. It fell short by about one bushel in six by weight besides not yielding but a little more than half a bushel by the shock. I shall have to buy wheat to last me till harvest time. The merchants in Batavia are buying up all the wheat they can get; they now give 50 cents a bushel in cash and it is on the rise. Neat cattle commands a pretty good price; middling cows \$15, oxen about \$60.

You requested me to write about my sheep. I spent some time last year to find some sheep, but could not purchase [any]. They were all drove to Canada last year that could

be purchased and kept to work all winter trying to purchase, but was not able to get any till their fleece were off this spring and have now got three pair by paying six dollars for them. Common wool sells for 50 cents per pound. I have not purchased any wool [as] I fine I can get cloth much cheaper at the stores than to pay the cash for manufacturing the same here. Flax I have a large supply of in the barn of last years growth, which is very good.

The little girl continues plump & hearty & grows very fast.

Noah is at work at his mill [and] has got his timber all hewed and on the spot and has got the ditch dug below the seat [By this he means the foundations of the dam that will supply water to his mill via the ditch, or flume.] across the flats to the creek & has got the seat about finished. The neighbors are helping him build it by subscription to take their pay in sawing when he gets his mill a-running. [He] calculates to raise his mill before haying. He does not know yet how he shall get his iron. He has talked to me some about coming after them, but I don't know that it would be possible for both of us to get money enough to come with and the prospect is so bad with me as to crops, health & everything else that I have given over the idea pretty much of coming. You may expect some person from these parts,, after them Noah talks some of getting you to fetch them to Albany.

Lester's farm I have let out to Twombly. He has taken possession & has agreed to clear land for it. We, however, could not agree as to the price and have agreed to leave it to Vaughn & Garfield to say how much he shall clear for the use of said farm, which they will probably do this week. Twombly has begun to chop. The old land was sowed with 30 bushel of clover chaff and got hold well and has now all disappeared. I have sowed about 6 acres with the same, which is likewise all gone. I am some fearful about it, but am in hopes it will come again whenever it should happen to rain.

June 6th

I receive some papers [newspapers] yet from Connecticut, yet I had stopped sending mine, since the receipt of Lester's letter and have not sent any since. I do not get mine from the press very regular & they are not very interesting & think you would not care about receiving them. If it is not too much trouble, I should like to have you send yours when convenient.

Jones is firm for selling, yet offers his farm now for 10 dollars an acre. Oliver Coe was here about two months ago on his road to New Connecticut. [I] expected him back, but have not seen him. He says he has no notion of purchasing Jones' farm.

The United States Court is now sitting in Batavia. One man received his sentence yesterday to be hung [hanged] the 20th of September next for counterfeiting the seal of the United States.

A young man by the name of Warren in this neighborhood went to Batavia yesterday with Noah's boys & went into the mill pond to go swimming & Warren got drowned and is to be buried today.

I must conclude, being in great haste & have now written more than you can read.

Yours, etc.

E. North