



The Conine Family Letters, 1852-1863:
“Just Think How We Are Scattered”

*Edited by Donald E. Baker**

*Contributed by Ruth Seymour Burmester***



“But just think how we are scattered,” Mary Ann Conine Seymour’s sister-in-law wrote in 1857,¹ and Mary Ann must have reflected upon the aptness of the remark. Her brother Horace Conine and her sister Emily Dorsey and their families were farming in northeastern Indiana; her sisters Catharine Skinner and Clarinda Howard were in northern Illinois and Wisconsin, respectively; and she herself was in Sauk County, Wisconsin, helping her husband Silas J. Seymour make a thriving working farm of the prairie land he had taken up in 1849. Only Mary Ann’s younger sister Jane was still at home with their father Derrick Conine in Wyoming County, western New York, and

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** Ruth Seymour Burmester—Mrs. Chris Burmester of Reedsburg, Wisconsin—is the granddaughter of Mary Ann Conine Seymour, the recipient of the Conine family letters. The complete, original Conine letters, in addition to correspondence and other records of the family of Mary Ann’s husband, Silas J. Seymour, are in Mrs. Burmester’s possession. This material is cited herein as the Conine-Seymour Collection. The photographs which accompany the published letters were also contributed by Mrs. Burmester.

¹ Horace and Mary Buckhout Conine to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour, January 11, 1857, printed below.

there were indications that Jane too was preparing to leave New York for the West.

Letters which the disperse members of the Conine family wrote to Mary Ann are now in the possession of her granddaughter, Ruth Seymour Burmester of Reedsburg, Wisconsin. Those written between 1852 and 1863 and published below, along with those written between 1849 and 1851 and published in the December issue of the *Indiana Magazine of History*,² comprise a very personal record of domestic life in midnineteenth century America. The subjects which occupied the Conines' attention in this second group of letters, as in the first, are the everyday events of the farmhouse, schoolhouse, and meetinghouse, the three centers of pioneer life. The affairs of the hearth—marriage, birth, the struggle for a livelihood, the hope of prosperity, death—are the constant concerns of these narratives as they were of the writers' lives.

One respect in which this second collection of Conine letters differs somewhat from that previously published is the amount of attention given to religion. The church at Burke Hill in Wyoming County, which Derrick Conine had helped build and which his family attended, was part of the Methodist Episcopal Church's Genesee Annual Conference, a district troubled throughout the 1850s by conflict between conservative and liberal groups of clergy and laity. The conservatives, called "Nazarites" by their opponents, felt that American Methodism's ever greater accession of members, wealth, and influence during the first half of the nineteenth century was being attended by increasing materialism and a dangerous blurring of the stark witness of the earliest followers of John Wesley regarding purity of personal living, simplicity of worship, and some points of Christian doctrine and experience. They vigorously set to work to stem "the oncoming flood of worldliness,"³ forcefully denounced what they saw as "an accommodating, compromising policy, pandering to the vices of the times," and strenuously called for

² Donald E. Baker, ed., "The Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851: Employed in Honest Business and Doing the Best We Can," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXIX (December, 1973), 320-65.

³ Edward P. Hart, "Introduction," in Wilson T. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America* (2 vols., Chicago, 1918), I, ix.

a return to the "old paths."⁴ For this they drew upon themselves the charge of fanaticism levelled by their more liberal brethren, whose motives for opposition ranged from heartfelt disagreement on doctrine to fear that the Nazarites' stringent rules of personal behavior and campmeeting revival methods would "drive away men of influence *needed to, the Church.*"⁵ During the early stages of this controversy, in 1853 and 1854, the Burke Hill meeting was served by one of the foremost Nazarite preachers, William C. Kendall, who was assisted during part of that time by his father-in-law John H. Wallace, a persuasive orator of the holiness school. The letters of Jane Conine during this period give an intimate view of the influence of Kendall and Wallace upon the Burke Hill congregation and, in particular, upon Jane herself, an impressionable young woman of twenty.⁶

The Conine family letters provide no deep insights into what many observers would consider the important movements, events, and personalities of the day. Politics and politicians are completely absent from the correspondence, for example, nor is there any mention of the burning issues of slavery and sectionalism. Yet there is value in the letters' very ordinariness, in their unwavering focus on their writers' day to day lives and concerns. From such testaments one can begin to understand the essential character of that preeminent nineteenth century phenomenon, the American pioneer.

⁴ Benjamin Titus Roberts, *Why Another Sect: Containing a Review of Articles by Bishop Simpson and Others on the Free Methodist Church* (Rochester, N. Y., 1879), 85-96.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 73. See also Leslie R. Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness: A Historical Interpretation of Free Methodism's First Century* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1960), 133-69; Walter W. Benjamin, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the Postwar Era," in Emory Stevens Bucke, ed., *The History of American Methodism* (3 vols., New York, 1964), II, 339-60.

⁶ The Nazarite controversy finally resulted in a full fledged schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the formation of the Free Methodist Church on Nazarite principles in 1860. Local Methodist Episcopal congregations split when many lay persons and some preachers of Nazarite sympathies withdrew, or in some cases were expelled, and joined the new denomination. About twenty-five people, including Delia Jeffres and other members of the Jeffres family so often mentioned in the Conine correspondence, were "read out" of the Burke Hill meeting. See Donald E. Poste, "Centennial of the First Free Methodist Church of Perry," *Historical Wyoming* (21 vols., mimeographed/multilithed, Arcade, N. Y., 1947-1968), XIII (April, 1960), 91. These later developments, which occurred after Jane Conine left New York for the West, are not chronicled in the Conine letters.

The Conine Family Letters, 1852-1863¹

Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

Perry [New York]²

Sep 15th 1852

Sister. Mary.

Having come to the conclusion that you would like to hear from neighbors if you did not from us I concluded to write you a few lines. If you should receive them please to notify the postmaster or some one else so that we may know I think we have recieved nothing from you since April. But you are onely acting under the Golden rule. but I'll tell you how it is if it was not Sunday I would runn over and give you the darndest scolding you ever had.

We are well and into the Plumbs up to our two Eyes we expect to have about 240 lbs Apples are not very plenty. Butter 14c in money at the door it has been very dry for a long time and Grasshoppers in abundance We have not had rain enough in our vicinity to lay the dust in nore than five

¹ The editing of the Conine family correspondence was accomplished using the original manuscript letters in the possession of Ruth Seymour Burmester, Reedsburg, Wisconsin. The editorial practices which were followed are the same as those used in the editing of the previously published Conine letters. See Donald E. Baker, ed., "The Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851: Employed in Honest Business and Doing the Best We Can," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXIX (December, 1973), 329n. In general it may be said that spacings and indentations have been standardized, that superfluous marks and obviously unintentional repetitions have been omitted, and that incorrect and phonetic spellings and erratic punctuation have been retained as found in the handwritten letters. Words underlined with a single stroke in the original documents have been transcribed in italics; words underlined with two strokes appear in small capital letters; words overlined with a single stroke appear in boldface type; words overlined with two strokes appear in italic large capital letters; and words overlined with three strokes appear in boldface large capital letters.

² Jane Conine was the only one of Derrick Conine's children who was still at home in the Burke Hill area of Perry Township, Wyoming County, New York, in 1852. All of the others had gone off to the West: Horace and his wife Mary Buckhout to near Newville, De Kalb County, Indiana, about 1846; Emily in the late 1840s to Scipio Township, Allen County, Indiana, where she married John Dorsey in 1850; Catharine and her husband William Skinner to Allen County, Indiana, about 1848, and then on to McHenry County, Illinois, in 1850; and Clarinda and her husband Lyman Howard to Wisconsin in 1850. The previous installment of Conine family letters ended with the marriage of Jane's next oldest sister Mary Ann to Silas J. Seymour, formerly of Covington Township, Wyoming County, in 1851 and her removal to his homestead in Sauk County, Wisconsin. See Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 320-65.

week untill yesterdy now it is wet enough (a fine time for drying fruit) Now I must tell you what I have got since you wer here (without doubt it will be very interesting) I had my dress last fall as you expected. In the spring a white silk bonnet a black cape & something to keep the sun off & last of all silver spoons. Now for the cost—first 12. . se[cond] 5. . thi[rd] 4½. . fou[rth] 18. . fift[h] 10½³ & I feel as if I had earned the whole a quilt like D— J. [Delia Jeffres] I made last Spring & a fay mad Cucumber seeds⁴ you remember telling me about them Mother has been spinning all summer so you can guess what I have been about.⁵ But I must tell you what a compliment I had a few weeks ago Mrs Crouch said that if she could have mee with her Ase— [Asenith's] place would be almost if not quite filled & now I must confess I felt some what flatterd⁶ & furthermore she said if my Bonnet was not a wedding one it was a marry-ing off one but I am not very much alarmed about her proph-

³ The numbers in this sentence are very unclear in the original letter, and those printed here could be disputed. The amounts are probably in "shillings," which seem to have been the units the Conines customarily used in calculating prices and wages. The word shilling was used in New York, as the word bit was used in the South and West, to denominate the value of 12½ cents. See Neil Carothers, *Fractional Money: A History of the Small Coins and Fractional Paper Currency of the United States* (New York, 1930), 34-35.

⁴ It is clear from the appearance of the manuscript that Jane Conine was writing in haste. This and other sentences are obviously unfinished. Delia Jeffres was a daughter of Thomas H. and Palmyra Jeffres of Perry Township. She was about twenty-six years old in 1853. Others who can be identified as members of this family are Delia's brothers Christopher, Clarn, John, Ezra and Elam (twins), Eugene, and Thomas; her younger sister Frances; and Betsey, who may have been Delia's sister or perhaps sister-in-law. All except the younger Thomas Jeffres are mentioned, most of them more than once, in the letters which follow. The Jeffreses may be traced in U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, population schedules for Wyoming County, New York (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. T-6, roll 239), 541; U.S., Eighth Census, 1860, population schedules for Wyoming County, New York (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 653, roll 883), 615, 655, 677, 681; U.S., Ninth Census, 1870, population schedules for Wyoming County, New York (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 593, roll 119), Perry Township, 28. National Archives Microfilm Publication T-6, the 1850 population schedules, has been superseded by National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 432, under the same title, in which the schedules for Wyoming County are on rolls 616 and 617.

⁵ "Mother" is Betsey Worden Conine, Derrick Conine's second wife and Jane Conine's stepmother. This is the first instance in the Conine correspondence of her being referred to by so affectionate a term.

⁶ At this point in the manuscript letter there follows a marked out line: "(what a pity that some of the others did not think so.)" Mrs. Crouch was Mrs. Hiram Crouch of Perry Township. Asenith was her daughter. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 541.

esy as yet thare is no more signs of it than when you wer here onely that **Ez** [and] **I** are better friends & by the by **he** is sparking Em Patridge⁷ But now I want you to spop reading & put your dishes away & evry thing of that description for what I am going to tell you will so astonnish you that unless du precution is taken I am fearful of the consequences. Marrid on the 8 in[stant] by the Rev—, Mr. John Jenkins to Miss Elizabeth Chapel all of Perry^x Marrid on the 5 in by the Rev Mr Miller[,] Mr George Coelman to Miss Jane Bush of Ganesville⁹ they started amediately for Ohio whare they intend to live if thay like¹⁰ the former couple went to Alexandre & wer marrid¹¹ forom thare to James Ferguso[n]¹² Gerome and Ma[r]ia are on hand yet & I think that will go off before long¹³

⁷ Ezra Jeffres seems to have been seeing Jane Conine before he turned his attentions to "Emely" Patridge, daughter of Betsey Patridge of Perry Township. See Mary M. Hitchcock to Mary Ann and Jane Conine, January 28, 1850, in Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 350; U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 526, 536.

⁸ Elizabeth Chappell was one of the twelve children of Lyman and Betsey Chappell of Perry Township, later of Avon, Livingston County, New York. She was about twenty-seven years old in 1852. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 543. Other members of the Lyman Chappell family mentioned in these letters include Maria, Mary, and Hannah.

⁹ Gainesville is a township of Wyoming County adjoining Perry Township on the southwest. There is also a village by that name within the township.

¹⁰ Ohio must not have suited the Colemans. In 1860 they were back in Wyoming County, farming in Perry Township. U.S., Eighth Census, 1860, Wyoming County, N.Y., 629. In 1863, after "a very clear conversion," George Coleman became an itinerant preacher in the Genesee Conference of the Free Methodist Church. In 1886 he was elected general superintendent of that denomination, an office the title of which was later changed to bishop. He retired in 1903 and died in 1907. See Wilson T. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America* (2 vols., Chicago, 1918), II, 222-23. Although Derrick Conine "helped build the Methodist [Episcopal] Church at Burk[e] Hill, near where he lived, and was a consistent member thereof, until he died," Coleman conducted his funeral in 1882. See Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, April 2, 1974, quoting an unmarked newspaper clipping in the Conine-Seymour Collection; and Harry S. Douglass, county historian of Wyoming County, New York, to Donald E. Baker, September 5, 1973, citing the Perry (New York) *Herald*, [August 11, 1882?].

¹¹ Alexander is a village and a township in southern Genesee County, New York, which borders Wyoming County on the north.

¹² A James Ferguson, a twenty-two year old bachelor farmer born in Ireland, is listed in the 1850 Perry census. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 583. How he fits into Jane Conine's recital of marriages is unclear.

¹³ "Jerome Ferguson was born in Perry, in 1822, and has been a life-long resident of the town, except three years spent in Illinois. He was married in 1852 to Maria Chappell, daughter of Lyman and Betsy Chappell, of Avon, Livingston county." F.W. Beers & Co., pubs., *History of Wyoming County, N.Y.* . . . (New York, 1880), 249.

John & wife are going [to] live in Pens [Pennsylvania] L— Buckhout Fitch is down so we are looking for news from that quarter Emily Forbs starts for Illinois to morrow Forbs has been thare during the summer John Jeffres has been studying with Esq Skinner but is now near Albany¹⁴ Adela has returned & purchased a one hundred [dollar] Diddle¹⁵ I have one to though not quite so expenive mine turns with a crank (you remember our paring machine) I am almost sick of mine & [would] sell it quite reasonable it never plays but one tune Nancy [Willes] is well¹⁶ Mary P— [Packard] is at home during confrence¹⁷ Dr Warner and son have died with the Cholera also Mr Chapin & daughter Mrs Huntington¹⁸ she left a child a few months old they had always lived at his fathers & he & child are thare yet.¹⁹ We would like to know

¹⁴ Esquire Skinner may have been Judge John B. Skinner of Wyoming village, a man with "a State reputation as one of the ablest jurists of western New York." Beers, *History of Wyoming County*, 216, 224. Or he may have been Austin Skinner, a Perry farmer referred to as "Esq." in the local newspapers. Harry S. Douglass to Donald E. Baker, September 17, 1973; U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 536. It is not known whether either of these men was related to William Skinner, Catharine Conine's husband.

¹⁵ As a verb, diddle has several meanings, one of them being to waste time in trifling. Jane Conine seems to have made the word a noun to denote the trifle with which the time was wasted, apparently a music box. "Adela" may refer to Delia Jeffres, as "Adelia" does in Jane's letter of May 24, 18[55], printed below.

¹⁶ Nancy Willes and her sister Lucy, along with Delia Jeffres, Mary M. Hitchcock, Mary W. C. Packard, and Mary Coleman, were the closest girlhood friends of Mary Ann and Jane Conine. They are all mentioned frequently in the Conine correspondence.

¹⁷ Mary W. C. Packard was married to Loren Packard, an itinerant Methodist Episcopal minister. See Nancy Willes to Mary Ann Conine Seymour, April 1, 1852, and Mary W. C. Packard to Mary Ann Conine Seymour, May 25, 1853, Conine-Seymour Collection in the possession of Ruth Seymour Burmester, Reedsburg, Wisconsin; and Ray Allen, *A Century of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1810-1910* (Rochester, N.Y., 1911), 109, cited in Harry S. Douglass to Donald E. Baker, September 17, 1973, wherein all subsequent references to the Allen volume may also be found.

¹⁸ Three Wyoming County newspapers—the *Attica Atlas*, the *Warsaw Wyoming County Mirror*, and the *Warsaw Western New-Yorker*—reported this outbreak of cholera. Willard J. Chapin, a tanner and currier in Perry village, and his daughter Caroline, the wife of Dr. T. Romayn Huntington of Perry, were reported to have contracted the disease in Rochester. The newspapers stated that both died on July 28, 1852, though Mrs. Huntington's marker in Hope Cemetery, Perry, gives the date of her death as July 22. Another victim of the epidemic was Samuel Melcher, about twenty-five years old, also of Perry. Harry S. Douglass to Donald E. Baker, September 17, 1973; U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 564, 567.

¹⁹ Dr. T. R. Huntington's father was Dr. James Huntington, another Perry physician. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 562.

what has become of [Lyman and Clarinda Conine] Howards family²⁰ O! how I would like to be in house to day it rains in torents & I am home sick enough I asshure you Wahat I shall do next winter is uncertain but I trust nothing very bad I went to see Frank Rawson a few weeks ago at Covington center²¹ he is in his brotherin-laws store Now I think of an other wonderful transaction Marina Rawson & L— Crandel wer [married] last spring²² that was a dreadful match Derrick Vanslyke is building a new house so father has had a call²³ also Mr & mrs Tompkins have condecended to stoop so lo as to enter our portals Gerome has just gon past he is growing more & more devout he is as smart a young man as we have here that so he even surpasses our Abner but I expct he and I will fall in love one of these days. Silas it is very much such a day to day as when you wore fathers small coat how I wish you wer hear to put it on to night

Tuesday mor

Father is goin to Perry so I must bring my letter to a close I[f] you write any thing particulal about mother put it on a sepperate piece for she sometimes wants to see the letters but be shure and send some good word to her or you will be sorry Electa is here with me and says she is ag[o]ing to write to you Write all about L. Howard & amediately.

²⁰ In 1850 Derrick Conine's eldest daughter Clarinda had emigrated with her husband Lyman Howard and their children to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A year later they moved to Dellona, Sauk County, near Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour, and then in 1853 they moved once more, this time to Newport, a river town not far from present Wisconsin Dells (then called Kilbourn City). Ruth Seymour Burmester to Lorna Lutes Sylvester, December 13, 1972, files of *Indiana Magazine of History*, Indiana University; Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, September 17, 1973.

²¹ Covington Center was the principal settlement in Covington Township, Wyoming County. J. Disturnell, pub., *A Gazetteer of the State of New-York . . .* (Albany, 1842), 135.

²² Marina Rawson was a daughter of Zenas and Harriet Rawson of Perry Township. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 537. Frank Rawson, mentioned above, may have been her brother. L. Crandel, the other half of the "dreadful match," has not been identified. He may have been a brother of Romelia Crandell, a circlet of whose hair, very intricately braided and formally presented as a "token of regard," is among Mary Ann Conine Seymour's papers in the Conine-Seymour Collection.

²³ Derrick Van Slyke may have been a son of Henry and Hannah Van Slyke of Perry Township. Other Van Slykes mentioned in these letters were members of that family. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 538. The Van Slyke and Conine families were related, Derrick Conine's half sister Anna having married a Van Slyke. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, November 8, 1973.

You must excuse all mistakes for I have not time [to]
look it over

Yours in haste
Jane the forgotton

I wrote on two differrent [sheets] through mistake

Horace Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

I dont know what day because
Myron has torn the Almanac²⁴
Newville [Indiana]
Dec. — '52

Dear Sister!

I have concluded to send you a wee bit of a scrawl, though you have never written to me and perhaps never mean to, but if you don't you need not be surprised if I should be after knowing the reason

I suppose you know where we live (or rather stay) if not, it is Newville De Kalb Co Ind; Address Hicksville Defiance Co. O. We are all in the enjoyment of tolerable health. I suppose you have learned that Jane [Conine] and Lydia [Buckhout]²⁵ pounced upon us a few weeks ago and bore off our Berton. The Yorkers rather boast of the success of their foray, but I intend at the "return of the year" to start an expedition to recover the plunder.

I obtained a sight of your letter to Emily²⁶ and can but conratulate you in the prospect of plenty, and the finest girl

²⁴ Horace Conine's son Myron Washington, sometimes called Milo, was one year old. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, population schedules for De Kalb County, Indiana (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 432, roll 142), 409. Horace's other children mentioned or alluded to in this letter are Horace Burton, born in 1846, and Mary Augusta, born in 1848. It is interesting to note that when Horace Conine was drafted during the Civil War he hired his unmarried son Burton to serve in his place. Mrs. Vera Husted Wilcox of Hicksville, Ohio, a great granddaughter of Horace Conine, owns a letter written from Horace to his son Burton before Burton's discharge in 1865. Vera Husted Wilcox to *Indiana Magazine of History*, May 13, 1974. Myron Conine's eldest child, Roscoe Conine, lives in Hicksville, Ohio, and was 100 years old on October 25, 1973. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, March 1, 15, 1973; April 2, 1974.

²⁵ Lydia Buckhout was a sister of Mary Buckhout, Horace Conine's wife. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, February 12, 1973.

²⁶ Emily Conine and her husband John Dorsey lived on a farm in Scipio Township, Allen County, Indiana, just south across the county line from Horace Conine's home in Newville Township, De Kalb County.

in Wisconsin, though I can but think that were it here it must rank 2nd.²⁷

I cannot really boast of our crops though we have no reason to complain. I had 440 bush. wheat[,] of corn rather less than common, potatoes and other *sass* plenty.²⁸

John's folks [the Dorseys] are tolerably well though he is not very rugged yet²⁹

I want you to write a long letter, tell all that's good about your country, nothing bad

Give my compliments to your husband though I should'nt know him from a side of sole leather, but can but hope that he is no very relation of Bill Skinner or Lyme Howard.

I think you have about enough of my nonsense so I will bite off. It is almost dark and I have to watch with a sick neighbor to night.

Sincerely your friend & brothe
Horace Conine

Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

[*postmarked* Perry Center, New York]³⁰
March 18th 1853

Dear sister, Mary

I have been looking for a letter from you, for many months past, but have been disappointed, for not one have I obtained the cause is unknown to me. The idea suggests itself perhaps they have forgotten you. if so I will try to bring myself again to you[r] remembrance I answered yours soon after I returned from Indiana, but not one word have I heard from you since. I must confess that I feel a little piqued at so long

²⁷ Mary Ann Conine Seymour's daughter Ellen Augusta, who Horace Conine felt should "rank second" to his own Mary Augusta, was born on July 19, 1852. Geo. A. Ogle & Co., pubs., *Memorial and Biographical Record and Illustrated Compendium of Biography . . . of Prominent Old Settlers and Representative Citizens of Columbia, Sauk and Adams Counties, Wisconsin* . . . (Chicago, 1901), 235.

²⁸ Sass is a dialectical term for garden vegetables.

²⁹ John Dorsey's health began to fail after he had "a dreadful time" in 1851 with, apparently, abscessed teeth. See Emily Conine Dorsey to Mary Ann and Jane Conine, [August 23, 1851], in Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 356.

³⁰ Though Perry village was the largest settlement in Perry Township, Wyoming County, the village of Perry Center was nearer the Conine home. In the previous decade it had consisted of a Presbyterian church, a tavern, two stores, and twenty-five or thirty houses. Disturnell, *Gazetteer of the State of New-York*, 320.

a delay, but enough of this. We are usually well Father was hurt by a horse but is able to be about. We are having a series of [religious] meeting here they have been five weeks now & expect them to continue longer Mr William Kendall is the preacher in charge & has done most of the preaching.³¹ He married Marth Wallace.³² they have been married about two years. I love them as I do my own relatives none ever have expressed more interest for me than they. it has caused a little jealousy with some. They have labored faithfully with

³¹ William C. Kendall was a Methodist Episcopal minister "in hearty sympathy with the holiness revival which was sweeping over Western New York and other sections of Methodism, and on this account was classed with the 'Nazaries,'" those preachers who felt that the Methodist Episcopal Church had strayed from the Wesleyism of their fathers and who declared themselves on the side of "vitalized religion . . ." Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church*, I, 51, 81. Wherever he served, Kendall encouraged "revivals," evangelical, enthusiastic meetings such as those Jane Conine mentions in this letter, which were intended to bring participants "into the enjoyment of entire holiness." It is said that during his service on the Covington Circuit, of which the Conines' church at Burke Hill was a part, "multitudes were saved." Kendall was ill used by the leadership of the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who were not sympathetic to the Nazaries' insistence upon strict adherence to all the forms of outward rite demanded by "primitive" Methodism, including simplicity of dress, proscription of instrumental music and choirs in the churches, and, especially, "fervency in worship." Year by year Kendall was assigned to less desirable pastorates and in the 1857 annual meeting of the conference he was formally charged with preaching "inacceptable" doctrine. The charges were held over to the next annual conference, by which time Kendall was dead, a victim of typhoid fever at age thirty-five. After his death "those who had been his violent persecutors seemed to vie with each other to do honor to his memory," while his followers placed the following inscription on his tombstone: "Our pastor—simple, earnest, fearless, ever-toiling, ever-happy. He fell as a martyr, he died at his post." B. T. Roberts, *Why Another Sect: Containing a Review of Articles by Bishop Simpson and Others on the Free Methodist Church* (Rochester, N.Y., 1879), 70-82; Donald E. Poste, "Centenary of Free Methodism, 1860-1960," *Historical Wyoming*, XIII (April, 1960), 70-71, 76-79. See also Leslie R. Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness: A Historical Interpretation of Free Methodism's First Century* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1960), 189-91, 198-201.

³² Martha Wallace married Kendall in the fall of 1850. A daughter of Methodist minister John H. Wallace (see footnote 34), Mrs. Kendall was an influential exemplar of the Nazarene spirit in her own right. After her husband's death she played an active part in the formation of the Free Methodist Church and later married Thomas S. LaDue, "one of Free Methodism's greatest pioneer preachers." Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church*, I, 375; II, 17. See also Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness*, 199n; Benson Howard Roberts, *Benjamin*

me & it was necessarie. I had become hard, in sin, and Satan was unwilling to looss so good an advocator of his cause. I have served him faithfully, but his ranks are thined in this community & I with many others have at last revolted instead of fighting for him. I am ready with all the strength that God imparts to me to oppose him. I have no longer a will of my own. I have dedicated my all to God & I have the ashurance the[t] it is accepted. Long have I felt the need of a friend to whome I could go in the hour of trouble[,] one that would impart to me words of consolation & I praise the name of God to day that I have found that friend[,] that I have him even in my heart & I have no fear of his taking his departure so long as I trust in him. The arm of God is not shortened that he cannot save. no, no he is able & willing to save all that will come to him, but we are commanded to ask if we would recieve; if we would be forgiven of our sins we must plead with him to bestow that pardon upon us & O! how willing he is to receive us. he stands even now with out stretched arms waiting to embrace us. why do we delay. just now venture all upon him. he will save you. methink I here you say, I believe it. but again many difficulties arise up before you. It is religion that you need to enable you to overcome. God has said my grace shall be sufficient for you & again if God is for me who can be against me.³³ we shall be brought off more than conquer through him who died for us. knowing that tribulation work for us a far more exceeding & eternal weight of glory. I would that you could enjoy the privileges of meetings as I have done of late. I have been to meeting evry night but three with[in] the last five weeks & nearly half of the time during the day. By the kindness of friends I was permitted to enjoy severel sermons delivered by

Titus Roberts, Late General Superintendent of the Free Methodist Church: A Biography (North Chili, N.Y., 1900), 51-52. That Martha Kendall was the daughter of John H. Wallace is verified in U.S., Seventh Census, population schedules for Clinton County, Michigan (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. T-6, roll 143), 95. (In National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 432 the population schedules for Clinton County are on roll 349). See also Evelyn L. Mottweiler, Secretary-Librarian of the Free Methodist Historical Center, Winona Lake, Indiana, to Donald E. Baker, March 7, 1974.

³³ See II Corinthians 12:9; Romans 8:31.

the Rev J H Wallace³⁴ at Mt Morriss.³⁵ I thare saw Mr Barney³⁶ & spent some little time at his house; conversing with Mr Wallace. Mr & Mrs Kendall wer desirous that such an interview should take place. he lectured me soundly I confess & I think it was beneficial. thare was no less than four ministers & Mrs Kendall & severel other to hear him I felt perfectly at home, which was contrary to my previous expectations. Thare has been severel united to the church[,] among the number Mr [and] Mrs Tillon,³⁷ Lucy Willis, Mrs George Coleman & Ezra J— [Jeffres] is marrid to Em P— [Patridge]. I know not but what you have returned to you[r] father[’s] house whare thare is bread enough & to spare I hope it is so. If not I pray Gods spirit to attend what I have written & it prove a blessing unto you

Jane Conine

³⁴ John H. Wallace “was a specially able advocate of the doctrine of holiness” and a preacher of “great ability and usefulness.” Roberts, *Why Another Sect*, 307. Emily Conine carried the memory of Wallace’s oratory with her to the frontier (see Emily Conine to Mary Ann Conine, [Autumn, 1849], and February 2, 1850, in Baker, “Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851,” 338, 352), and his influence over Jane Conine is well illustrated in the letters which follow. He assisted his son-in-law, Kendall, on the Covington Circuit during 1853. In 1857 Wallace was expelled from his conference on charges of adultery with his housekeeper during the long insanity of his wife. After he thus “grievously fell,” he “again sought the Lord with great earnestness” and before his death in 1864 “gave every evidence of having been restored to his favor.” Buffalo (New York) *Earnest Christian*, February, 1864, quoted in Donald E. Poste to Donald E. Baker, March 4, 1974. See also Allen, *Century of the Genesee Annual Conference*, 127; Poste, “Centenary of Free Methodism,” 70; and Francis W. Conable, *History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, From Its Organization by Bishops Asbury and M’Kendree in 1810, to the Year 1884* (2nd ed., New York, 1885), 625-26, cited in Donald E. Poste to Donald E. Baker, February 23, 1974. Conable, writing after the Nazarite controversies had culminated in the formation of the Free Methodist Church, attempted to link Wallace with the Nazarite leadership. One of the founders of the Free Methodist Church resisted any association of Wallace with the origin of that denomination, declaring that Wallace “had no more relation to it than other men had who preached holiness before it was thought of.” Roberts, *Why Another Sect*, 307-308.

³⁵ Mt. Morris is in Livingston County, New York, which borders Wyoming County on the east.

³⁶ George W. Barney of Mt. Morris was an active conservative Methodist layman. See Donald E. Poste, “Centennial of the First Free Methodist Church of Perry,” *Historical Wyoming*, XIII (April, 1960), 89.

³⁷ The Tillons were probably James Tillon, Jr., and his wife Elizabeth. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 528.

D. [Delia] Jeffers & her father have eperienced the blessing of holiness.³⁸ Write me immediately tell Fanny [Howard] that I shall write to her soon.³⁹ Catharine [Conine Skinner] is comming down next fall.⁴⁰ My love to Silas & a kiss to the little one

Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour⁴¹

Perry [New York]
July 20 18[5]3

Dear brother & sister,

Doubtless you have long since thought yourselves forgotten by us; but thare I [am] happy to say, you labour under a mistake I have but <to> plead guilty for not writing you before. you feel as I often do. What if their work does hurry them. they might spend an hour in writing to one with whome they formally loved so well to converse. But now I will try to give you a short history of myself & employment of late We keep four cows: you well know on whome the house work depends, so you can imagine what I have to do in that line. I have [Horace's son] Burtons sewing & my own to do & a part of fathers. Then I am making me a carpet. go to school at 1½ pa[s]t 3 to recite in French.⁴² now you may laugh if so inclined at this last, as your thoughts carry you

³⁸ Thomas H. Jeffres became a prominent lay spokesman in the Nazarite movement. Delia Jeffres became one of the original faculty of the Free Methodists' Chili (later A.M. Chesbrough) Seminary, which opened in North Chili, New York, in 1868. She left a reputation not only as "a very competent" but also as "a very godly" teacher, "one who left her impress for good on all who came under her instruction." In 1869, at age forty-two, she married Thomas B. Catton, "one of the strong pillars of Free Methodism" and one time Prohibition candidate for the office of lieutenant governor of New York. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church*, I, 203, 215, 348; II, 309-10; Perry (New York) *Herald*, June, 1909, cited in Harry S. Douglass to Donald E. Baker, September 5, 1973.

³⁹ Fanny Howard, born in 1839, was the oldest of the nine children born to Lyman and Clarinda Conine Howard. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, March 1, 1973. Other references in the Conine correspondence suggest that communication between Clarinda and the rest of the Conine family was either through one of her daughters or through Mary Ann Conine Seymour.

⁴⁰ Letters written by Catharine Conine Skinner from Indiana and Illinois, 1848-1850, appear in Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 329-36, 354-55.

⁴¹ The original draft of this letter was in ink, but several words and punctuation marks have been inserted on the manuscript in pencil, presumably by Jane Conine. The editor has enclosed such additions in pointed brackets.

⁴² Since there was at this time no academy within "commuting distance" of the Conine home, Jane Conine was probably attending a private school, several of which were established in Perry Township between 1820 and 1870. See Frank D. Roberts and Carl G. Clarke, *History of the Town of Perry, New York* ([Perry, N.Y.], 1915), 109-11.

back to Wyo. when I did not get one perfect lesson.⁴³ But now it <is> easy & I love it. It is now 15 minutes after 3 & <as> I have my lesson to look over, you will have to excuse me. At home again. now all this I have to do. my health is far from good this summer. father & mother are both complaining so I have to keep as still as possible. We have had a campmeeting in what used to be Mr John Hitchcock woods. he sold this last spring<,> to Mr Bratt & providence permitting we expect another next year. The Lord dealet graciously with us. we have enjoyed within the past six months greater privileges than we ever did before. Are we truly thankful to God who giveth us His blessings are questions which I am often asking my own heart. I feel to night that I have no will of my own, & that I am whol<l>y the Lords. This is not only the privilege of all but the duty.

Since writing the above, I have been quite unlucky last F[ri]day while picking cherries the limb broke that I was on & I fell. I have no reco<l>lection of the limbs breaking<,> or of going into the house. When mother found me I was on the lounge. It was not long however before I came to my self. I fell on my left side, was considerably injured<;> principally externally I am much better now, but not fully recovered O! how I missed your kind attention. I was able to wait upon myself excepting the first day, or<,> I did it<,> whethe<r> I was able to or not. We are repairing our meeting house painting it out side & in; don some plastering; fixed the pulpit, & think it will look much better when completed. Mrs Jeffres is quite unwell, she has been failing for severel months; her recovery to us<.> looks doubtful<;> but she is in the hands<,> of an Omnipotant being, one who will do all things well. When <I> write, <or> think of the mercy<,> the goodness<,> of God I am fil<l>ed with wonder & love & praise. I feel truly that "the love of christ doth me constrain, To seek the wandering souls of men. With prayers entreaties tears to save To snatch then from the gaping grave.["]"⁴⁴ & these feelings as christians we

⁴³ "Wyo." refers to Middlebury Academy in the village of Wyoming, Wyoming County, New York. Mary Ann Conine had attended school there in 1849. See Catharine Conine Skinner to Mary Ann Conine, January 5, 1849, in Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 330. Apparently Jane Conine had also attended "Wyo."

⁴⁴ Except that she substitutes "prayers" for "cries," Jane Conine is here quoting the second stanza of the hymn "Saviour of Men, Thy Searching Eye," written by Johann Joseph Winckler, translated by John Wesley, and sung to the tune "Gilford." See *A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Principally from the Collection of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (New York, 1847), 402-403; John

ought to possess. I do not believe that they are confined<,> simply<,> to **ministers**, or **their wives**, but we can all feel as great an interest for the salvation of our fellow being & **work** oftentimes as effectually, for them, as though we occupied a more **exalted** position. Do not imagine by what I have written that I think myself called to preach<,> or to be a preachers<,> wife, **far from it**: but my prayer is<:> Lord enable me to fill well the position **thou** designest for me. I never feel more at home, than when endeavouring (not in my own strength) to present the truths of God to the yet unconverted. O! **I do rejoice** to night that I ever sought & obtained an interest in the saviors blood. O! how freely was that blood spilled for us & how oft have we trampled upon it; & said "we would not have this man Christ Jesus to rule over us.["]⁴⁵ I felt last winter before the protracted effort commenced; at times the strivings of the spirit of God but like many others I was putting it [off] untill a more convenient season. These words truly represent my case for a few weeks. "Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as salt.["]⁴⁶ I was entirely in his power: he had but to issue his mandate & it was obeyed. When I felt the strivings of the spirit of God, I only laughed the hearer[,] sought more earnestly to obtain happiness in the vanity of earth. At the first meeting I felt two spirits contending with me, & felt that I was called upon to decide my eternal destiny. I saw plainly my position, the consequences of my deciding. O! you cannot imagine what I endured. for nearly two week I remained in this state. Bro—Kendall plead with me, others conversed but still I was unwilling to give up all for Christ & truly speaking, I think I suffered more than to die a natural death. I remember of saying to Bro K at one time, I am dying by inches. He laughing said that is just what we want, die to sin that you may live unto God. At this point I had given up all but one thing. When ever I attempted to pray that article was hung up to my view & I would close my mouth instantly, deeming it but mockery to attempt to worship God, while conscious of retaining an other idle. Bro— K— had conversed with me with regard to it, but I positively declared that I could keep it & use it & more than that **I would do it**. there was no hurt

Julian, *A Dictionary of Hymnology: Setting Forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of All Ages and Nations* (London, 1908), 1286-87.

⁴⁵ This is a paraphrase from Luke, 19:14.

⁴⁶ See Luke, 22:31: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."

in it, I was able to have it & I should keep it. At one time while forward for praye[r]s he knelt by me & asked me this question: are you willing to give up your jewelry. I thought a moment & told him I was. to him I simply said, I am, but in my heart I added a little condition to, it, which was this. I am, "if I cannot obtain religion without it.["] religion I felt I must have at all events, but I would try & keep all of the worlds fooleries with it that I could. Instead of doing as we are commanded, to give our hearts unto the Lord, I was keeping back a part of the price reserving a spot where on to cultivate pride. but atlength the point was gained. The Pencil was given up for it [was] no more nor less than a gold pencil that caused me all this.⁴⁷ How often do we hear people say they would not exchange their hope for worlds like this. The devel well know how to takee us, not by presenting the world in a lump but by showing us a few of its glittering toys. Lord help me to withstand time & space will not permit of my writing more. Let me hear forom you soon. inform me with regard to your spiritual state aswell as temporal

Jane C

My writing so much about myself perhaps will not make my letter very interesting to you. These wer my exercise with regard to justification. Those for sanctification wer if possable more severe⁴⁸ He did graciously lead me on step by step & by him I humbly trust I am still gurded

⁴⁷ John Wesley, in his sermon "On Dress," denounced the wearing of rich clothing, expensive adornment, and gold ornamentation on the grounds that such things engendered pride, vanity, and anger; tended to create and inflame lust; and diverted the Christian's attention from the divine to the profane. See John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (3 vols., New York, 1818), II, 423-33. Until 1856 the Methodist Episcopal Discipline charged Methodists to "receive none into the church till they have left off superfluous ornaments" and ordered ministers to read Wesley's sermon "at least once a year in every society." By the 1850s, the extent to which preachers insisted on compliance with this rule was one of the characteristics which distinguished Nazarites from their more liberal colleagues. In 1856 the Discipline was altered so that the explicit prohibition of costly array was dropped and the required reading of Wesley's sermon was replaced by a recommendation that "all our people be exhorted to conform to the spirit" of simplicity of dress and adornment. Nazarites regarded this change as one of several indications of the increasing worldliness of the Methodist Episcopal Church. See Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness*, 146-49. Marston quotes the Discipline on page 147.

⁴⁸ Methodism from Wesley's time had "maintained the distinction between justification, wherein power is received to live without committing sin, and entire sanctification, where the inner impulses to sin are purged away." By the midnineteenth century liberal churchmen were inclined to regard sanctification as something acquired gradually through self discipline, and they favored admitting "seekers" into full Methodist fellowship. Conservatives regarded sanctification as an instantaneous "work of grace through the Holy Spirit changing the core of a man's being," and they wished to make evidence of the possession

**Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour
with a postscript from Derrick Conine**

Perry [New York]
Nov 6th /53

Sister. Mary.

The reception of yours of the 15th gave us much pleasure. we had almost dispared of hearing from you but as fate would have it, we wer doomed to disapointment, even in that, & should providence dispense the like unto us a little oftner we would not object. We are enjoying our usual health. With the exception of a severe cold, I am much better than I was last spring. I am very buisy just now: making preperations, for school. Lucy Willes, Martha Rawson,⁴⁹ & myself intend to spend a few months at Wyoming, [Middlebury Academy,] this winter.⁵⁰ It would be useless to give you a description of my employment; you having passed through the same years ago it would be an old story. Mothe[r] starts for New York one week from to morrow, in company with Mr & Mrs Buckhout, to be gon about two weeks.⁵¹ Father would go to see

of "perfect love" a prerequisite for admitting a person to full fellowship. This difference in attitude toward sanctification was the doctrinal heart of the Nazarite controversy and was reflected in the strict rules for membership adopted by the Free Methodist Church after its establishment. See Walter W. Benjamin, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the Postwar Era," in Emory Stevens Bucke, ed., *The History of American Methodism* (3 vols., New York, 1964), II, 339-60, especially pages 355-58, where the words quoted above may be found. Benjamin's essay contains a short, balanced history of the conflict in the Genesee Conference and the organization of the Free Methodist Church, which concludes that both "Methodist Episcopal and Free Methodist partisans shared the guilt for the rupture" (p. 358). Roberts, *Why Another Sect*; Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church*; and Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness* are fuller accounts of the schism, from the Free Methodist point of view. For a history of the development of the doctrine of entire sanctification, see John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (New York, 1956).

⁴⁹ Martha Rawson, fifteen years old in 1853, was a daughter of Zenas and Harriet Rawson of Perry Township and a sister of Marina Rawson (see footnote 22, above). U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 537.

⁵⁰ There is an account of a visit to Jane Conine and Lucy Willes at "Wyo." in Nancy M. Willes to Mary Ann Conine Seymour, January 26, 1854, Conine-Seymour Collection.

⁵¹ Mr. Buckhout was probably Philip Buckhout, who was doubly related to the Conines. His first wife, Mary Worden Buckhout, who died in 1842, had been a sister of the second Mrs. Derrick Conine, and his daughter Mary was married to Horace Conine. The Mrs. Buckhout mentioned in this letter would have been Philip Buckhout's second wife, Phebe. See Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, February 12, 1973; Harry S. Douglass to Donald E. Baker, September 5, 1973; U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 418.

Aunt Catharine, if he knew where to find her, but as it is I think he will stay at home.⁵² I feel quite anxious to attend school this winter but there is something of a dread in connection with it. if I could but learn easily, I would not fear; but as it is, it requires greater application. If I could learn as fast as Horace's Burton I would not stop short of a thorough education when he came here, he could only read in words of three letters. he went home in July & could then read well in Sanders 2. he was a much better scholar than Adelbert W Horace & Mary [Conine] were down in July. Our folks have just gone to evening meeting, from which I am detained on account of my cold. We are highly favored, this year as regards, our preachers. We have Mr Wallace & Kendall. the former is much smarter, than he used to be. he has preached here three times, & stayed with us to nights. we have our preaching at 2 O'clock] & they usually stay over night. it was W— turn to preach to day but he was not able to come. O! how I love to talk with him. the last time he was here, we had quite a talk about dress & & you know he is an old hand at, *THAT*, so I did not stand much of a chance but I did the best I could. he laughed at me, considerable, & finally asked if [I] would not take a text & preach & (don't you think I was naughty enough) to tell him, that I did not think, I had any call, or I would. I wonder that he & Kendall do not both get discouraged with me. but I guess he has not, for he went from our house, to John Saffords & told him he should see me again. O! I love him. I have great confidence, in his judgment, but still I do not agree, with him, in all his opinions, but I have a firm belief that God will enlighten me, with regard to them. I feel that I am, highly favored, in enjoying the society of so deeply pious a person & I trust I shall prove myself worthy his attention. We have been repairing our Church, taken the pulpit down, painted & varnished the seats & papered the wall & got window curtains & painted the outside, & done some carpeting, so that with all it presents quite a different appearance than formerly. Death has been in our land & numbers have been called to try the reality of eternity. Mary A Vanslyke died in July, with the Dropsy. she left a bright evidence that she had gone home to glory,

⁵² Derrick Conine's sister Catharine, born in 1790, "was said to have lived on Long Island." Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, August 31, 1973.

but it has not made that impression upon the family that we hoped it would Harried Gardner or Mrs P— died with the Typhoid fever Mrs Luther Worden with the same Miss S Long was just alive the last I heard.⁵³ Mr Martain while going west on a visit was thrown from a stage & injured & a fever setting in, he lingered a few weeks, & was brought home a corps.⁵⁴ Mr Kellog that lived on the Carpanter place, started from home well, went into a store in Leroy⁵⁵ & dropped down dead, cause by disease of the heart. truly in a day & hour when we think not the son of man cometh⁵⁶

Jane

I was very much obliged for those flower seeds. Your little one is as pretty as ever I suppose. be careful not to make it an idle. The Lord gave & he has power to take away. Write soon.

Dear child

you wished me to rite A few lines to you well I hardly [know] what to rite to you I am well and hope you am in Joying the same blesing and I hope that you am dewing well[,] that is striving to lay up your t[r]esher in that beter world ware sorrow and dis apoint ment will not come in this world sorrow rains and I sometimes think that I s[h]all fall by the hand of my enamy but then when I realise whare my strenth comes from I am stil incureged to try to live A cristin one thing I am sure of[,] that if I am saved it will be throu grate tribulateo[n] for in this part of the world thare is many stormy days but the lord has sed that his grace was supfishent for all that put thare trust in him⁵⁷ I want to sea you and silas and that eair [that is, heir] of yours But wether I shall have that previelige or not I dont no some times I think A bout comeing out but when I think of the distance I give it up but if I never sea you A gain in this world dew try my children to meat me in the world A bove I ask no more I remane your farther and friend

D Conine

⁵³ Sarah E. Long, aged twenty, lived in Perry Township with Luther D. Worden and his wife Sarah, aged twenty-four. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 537.

⁵⁴ Mr. Martain may have been John Martin, aged fifty-two, who died October 12, 1853, and is buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery, Perry Center. Harry S. Douglass to Donald E. Baker, September 17, 1973.

⁵⁵ The village of Le Roy is in Genessee County, which adjoins Wyoming County on the north.

⁵⁶ See Luke, 12:40.

⁵⁷ See II Corinthians, 12:9.

Emily Conine Dorsey to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

[*postmarked* Halls Corners, Indiana⁵⁸
Dec. 17] [1853]

Dear brother and sister

Having a few leisure moments I improve them in writing to you. I suppose you have been expecting a letter for some time I ought to have written sooner but have not time. We are enjoyin very good health at present John's health is much better than it was in the fall. Sis talks qu[i]te pla[i]n and goes to school some, for by the by I am engaged in school again⁵⁹ I have a girl who pretends to do the [house] work but dear me! it requires the patience of Job! William [Skinner] was here a few days since he was well and left his family so. We heard from home a short time since all well Jane is attending school at Wyoming. Mary Van Slike is dead and Luther Warden's wife. Horace and family have been home this fall. Aunt Bets was very generous for she sent me just nothing at all⁶⁰ Father strained his rigging and [sent] 2 yds of shilling calico but enough of this.

Wheat was good[,] corn frst rate we had an ear that measured 13 inches. You wrote about your tall corn but if it beat ours it must have got up pretty tol. I never saw such corn. Potatoes fine We have the largest Turneps I ever saw and a lot of them Wheat fetches a good price it is said to [be] \$1.40 per bushel.

I dont think of any thing to write that will be interesting; if I could see you we would have a long chat I assure you I hope you will come and see us if you dont I fear we shall not see each other very soon William's folks [William and Catharine Conine Skinner] talk some of visiting you this winter

⁵⁸ Hall's Corners was a post office in Springfield Township, Allen County, Indiana. Brant & Fuller, pubs., *Valley of the Upper Maumee River, with Historical Account of Allen County and the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana* . . . (2 vols., Madison, Wis., 1889), I, 351.

⁵⁹ "Sis" refers to Emily Conine Dorsey's daughter Mary Delucia, who was born in December, 1851. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Lorna Lutes Sylvester, December 13, 1972, files of the *Indiana Magazine of History*. Emily had previously taught school in Scipio Township, Allen County, Indiana, in 1849 and 1850. For a description of her teaching experiences at that time see Emily Conine to Mary Ann Conine with a postscript to Jane Conine, [Autumn, 1849], and Emily Conine to Mary Ann Conine, February 2, 1850, in Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 336-41, 351-54.

⁶⁰ "Aunt Bets" is one of Emily Conine Dorsey's names for her step-mother, Betsey Worden Conine.

Give my love to Clarinda and answer this letter if you can read it

Emily Dorsey

**Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour
with a postscript from Derrick Conine**

Perry [New York]

Feb 13th /54

Dear Sister.

It is with pleasure that I perused your letter I had almost concluded that we wer forgotten & at **times** my meditation on the subject wer **none** of the pleasantest. I came home [from "Wyo."] the 17th & shall providenc permitting return to morrow. I am very much pleased with my school. Mr Weed is principal.⁶¹ We room in Mrs Hedges house & could not have been better situated.⁶² We engaged a room of Mr Havens but owing to some misunderstanding we wer disappointed. when Mr Willes went down with the stove & wood I went to whare our room was it wasnt thare. Mr H— he met with the Rev Mr Wahles[?] pastor of the ME Church in that place & with whom I had had some acquaintance, & with the united efforts of latter & Mrs Havens we procured our present abode & for which I feel truly greatful but enough of this. I enjoy myself well this winter—**so well** that I shall coax hard to morrow morning for the privilege of staying another term. four weeks more closes this. My health is good[,] much better than when I am working as hard as I can dip[?]intoit. As my time [is] limited I must not stop upon any one point it is now allmost meeting time Asenith [Crouch] is not well & it is supposed has the Consumption.⁶³ Marshal Skinner is no more he was deranged the most of the time during his ill-

⁶¹ Monroe Weed, a graduate of Madison University, was elected principal of Middlebury Academy in 1852 and remained for fourteen years. Beers, *History of Wyoming County*, 218.

⁶² Jane Conine's landlady was probably Ruth Hedges, wife of Stephen Hedges, a tailor in Wyoming village. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 474, 477. "About all the families took borders at Middlebury [Wyoming] village . . . Board at first [about 1819] was a dollar a week, then \$1.25, \$1.50, \$2.00 and finally \$2.50, illustrating the great law of progress." Beers, *History of Wyoming County*, 219.

⁶³ Asenith Crouch died of consumption (tuberculosis) in April, 1854. See Naomi Seymour Morgan's postscript in Susan Seymour to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour, April 17, 1854, in Burmester, "Silas J. Seymour Letters (III)," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXXII (June, 1949), 471.

ness & died with a hope of heaven.⁶⁴ O! Lord spare yet a little longer the youth at B— [Burke] hill for peradventure they will repent. these words for weeks have been my constant companions "Tis not the **all** of life to live Nor **all** of death to die,"⁶⁵ & I would that I lived more in accordance with this trouth. Clarn & Delia [Jeffres] wer here last eavning. C— has started again to serve God. we are not having any special meetings but the Lord is at work. he can work & none can hinder. Mary Chappel has come out *QUITE* decided to be for the Lord. for nearly a year she has been trying to pray & to live, or what would better express it serve the Devel publicly & the Lord in private. knowing about whare she stood I had felt uncommonly solisitous for her. She is going home with us to spend a few days. Mrs Jeffers it is supposed is as well as she will be. her limbs still remain numb. wer it not for this she would be comfortabel George Coleman has a daughter & so has Betsy Jef—. I have an abundance to tell you did time permit. I would like to know when you think of comming home. I would like to he[ar] something about that. Nancy [Willes] has written so lately that I suppose some of the above is not knews. They appear to like their mother very well⁶⁶ I never have spoken to her yet.

Do write oftener.

Yours &
Jane.

⁶⁴ Marshall Skinner, oldest son of Austin and Harriet Skinner of Perry Township, died of typhoid on December 8, 1853. A notice of Skinner's death in the Warsaw (New York) *Western New-Yorker* seems to have been the only contemporary public mention of the typhoid outbreak in Perry in the winter of 1853, an outbreak which Jane Conine's previous letter suggests was extensive. Harry S. Douglass to Donald E. Baker, September 17, 1973; U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 536.

⁶⁵ With one slight error, Jane Conine is quoting a line from the second stanza of a poem by James Montgomery called "Life and Death,—Time and Eternity" or sometimes "The Issues of Life and Death":

"Oh, where shall rest be found,—	"The world can never give
Rest for the weary soul?	The bliss for which we sigh;
"Twere vain the ocean's depths to sound,	"Tis not the whole of life to live,
Or pierce to either pole:	Nor all of death to die."

T. Nelson & Sons, pubs., *Poetical Works of James Montgomery: With Life* (London, 1863), 422. The poem appears as a hymn in an old Methodist hymnal—one lacking a title page and otherwise unidentified as to date of publication—in the Indiana University Library, Bloomington.

⁶⁶ Jane Conine is here referring to Nancy and Lucy Willes' step-mother. Their father, Joshua Willes of Perry Township, had recently remarried after the death of their mother. The change, Nancy wrote, "cost me many a tear." Nancy M. Willes to Mary Ann Conine Seymour,

if you can read this you will deserve praising I wish you could try my pen I have not been to spelling schools lately. Suppose probly you disciver that

Perry

Dear children

I wold take this opertunity to rite A few lines to you to let you kno that we am well at present we have had A very plesent winter but very litel snow the wether is very change abel Some days very cold and then very warm it is now A ginerel state of heath but stil many have died and some very suden[,] some in three days and some in one weak and some have falin down and died instanously but stil we live weat is worth 2 dolers A bushel • Corn six shilings oats 4[?] silings the lord is stil with us hear Ealom Jeffers has expearined religon and so has mary Chapel

I wold like to have you rite me what land is worth ware [Lyman] howerd is and how much of A place he has takin up and wether it wold b[e] worth wile to by A place for the children to work and wether thar is A prospect [it] wold rise so as to be beter property than mony on intrust I shold like to no wether liman has any team or not or wether his farmily is nothing but A crambery pach so that he can live on berys if he has got A good place and cant pay for it I dont no but I may pay forit for the children but not for him but you nead not say any thing to him to that afect un les they am liked to be turnd of[f] and loos [it] then rite to me if it dont cost tow much I may by et⁶⁷ I think now that Shold I live and nothing hapin that is no misfortin that I sall come out A year from next fol or spring if ever rligon stil prospers here yet last sunty nite we had one of the best of meatings for the lord was thare sister Colman got so fild with the love of god that she shouted with all hur mite and declaerd to the world that the lord had saved hur from hur sins the work of the sank ty fieng power of god is going on in the church this winter more than I ever new it 25 in mosco have expearencid

January 26, 1854, Conine-Seymour Collection. The trauma Mary Ann and Jane Conine experienced under similar circumstances is a principal theme of the Conine family letters through 1851.

⁶⁷ The value of Lyman Howard's real estate, as recorded in the 1860 census, was \$1,300. This seems to have been comparable to the value of his neighbors' farms. U.S., Eighth Census, 1860, population schedules for Columbia County, Wisconsin (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 653, roll 1401), 470.

the blesing⁶⁸ we have Brother wales and kendel for our preachers and they p[r]each the hole gospel with all thare mite wen I begin to rite on the subject of religon I dont no ware to stop but I must so good by for the present

D Conine

If riches in creas set not your affecttions on them oanly hold them as blesings from the lord and yous them for his glory make religon the mane bis ness of life and then you will be safe and if death shold close up your life you will go to rest rite soon and rite all the nuse Jane had A leter from [Clarinda Conine] Howards girl and she rote that hur mother sed she suposed that farther didnt want to hear from hur wy she s[h]old think so I dont no without it is that I dont like limes calculation⁶⁹

Emily Conine Dorsey to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour
Scipio [postmarked Fort Wayne, Indiana]
March 28th 1854

Dear sister

This evening finds me a lone. therefore I shall spend a few moments by writing to you. We are glad you have not forgotten us as we had begun to think Is not this a blessing that we can hear from each other though we are not permitted to see each other. My health is good and has been for the most part of the winter Mary is quite well now, she has been sick a good deal this winter. John's health is poor and I fear is like to remain so This is the evil wind which blew me again into the school room. You know we have the school-house under our nose. I am to have \$48 for 12 weeks work. If we could have had good girls it would not have been bad

⁶⁸ Moscow was a village in Livingston County, New York, across the Wyoming County line to the east. The Methodist church there, like that at Burke Hill, was part of the Covington Circuit, served at this time by the Reverends Kendall and Wallace. Poste, "Centenary of Free Methodism," 70.

⁶⁹ If Lyman Howard was calculating on the future prosperity of the village of Newport, Wisconsin, near which his farm was located, then his father-in-law was right to be suspicious, though Howard was not alone in his hopes and in his eventual disappointment. Believing that the Milwaukee and La Crosse Railroad would cross the Wisconsin River at the townsite, 1,200 people settled in the village in the early 1850s. However, the railroad bypassed Newport, and by 1868 "the last traces of the former glory" of the town "were wiped out." Western Historical Company, pubs., *The History of Sauk County, Wisconsin* . . . (Chicago, 1888), 636-37. See also Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, February 6, 1973.

at all, 5 weeks of the time I done my own [house] work for I would not [hire girls] any more. Dear me if I could not do more than some of the girls here I would not impose upon people so much as to offer my self

Horace and family are well. They are to build a new house next summer. He has gone to town today to buy nails, glass and all such things. He is doing first rate. William [Skinner] has been down twice this winter buying horses. I dont know but he makes it profitable. I would not like to have John gone from home so much

I have not heard from home for a long time. they as you say have joind the Quakers perhaps⁷⁰ I hope you hear oftener

We had the most freezeing wether last winter that has ever been known in these parts Potatoes suffered extremely. we have lost all of half of ours. Wheat look *bad* a great many fields will be plowed up. We are thankful that ours looks good. We have got along well considerin John's poor health, better than could be expected. I dont know but I should be too happy if he could regain his health.

I wish you lived here I think you would like it better but Silas dont think so I suppose. Just come out here and then you will know. We want very much to see you all but fear we shall not unless you make us a visit. Dont you think of coming? We had a young winter last night but it is all most gone. You see I did not finish writing in the evening as I expected for the boys got home from [Fort] Wayne sooner than I expected and it is almost impossable to do so now for sis is such a little mischief. Her father bought her a toy Parrot which takes up part of the time My thinking cap is off so you must excuse me. Give my love to Clarinda and the children.

Emily Dorsey

Brother Silas

I was in hopes John would f[i]ll this page but he declines. he wishes me to inform you of the prices: Wheat \$1.30 Corn '48. Oats '35 Potatoes '45 Beef '6, per pound Pork '4.⁷¹ he also wishes me to ask you to state your prices, and

⁷⁰ This is an ironic allusion to the Quakers' practice of having no talk or other breech of quiet in their worship services until some member of the meeting felt moved to break the silence and speak on some matter of concern.

⁷¹ It appears that Emily Conine Dorsey is using single quote marks (reverse apostrophes) to indicate cents.



Top, HORACE AND MARY BUCKHOUT CONINE
Middle, DERRICK AND BETSEY WORDEN CONINE
Bottom, SILAS AND MARY ANN CONINE SEYMOUR

how wheat look in your part of the country. We want to know if you keep Sheep yet or if they can be kept and whether cattle do well with you and their rate. With us they are very high Oxen first rate from \$100, to \$105, Cows 20, 25, 30. John sold 6 head last fall and winter 1 yoke of cattle[,] 1 of 3 year old steers and 1 of 2 years we have left 4 cows 4 two year old steers 1 yearling and 3 calves. We have horses now instead of Oxen. You will think this a botched up mes but I guess you can read it and I hope you and Mary will take time soon to answer this.

E. D. D

We want to know how far you are from market

Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

[*postmarked* Covington, New York]

June 13th [1854]

Finds me the sole occupant of our little room, "the south chamber." it looks very much like old times, so much so that I think you could feel quite at home here. O! those wer happy days! but we knew it not, then as now. sweet yet painful recollections, are they. Truly has it been said of life, "tis a dream" when I detect myself living those days over, for a moment I almost think I an dreaming, but a second thought remooves this delusion and numarous[?] facts present themselves to prove it a reality. For some reason I feel wonderfully irritable to night & noise confuses me. how! I wish our folks would stop talking & take a journey to the land of Nod. I may attribute my feelings to my rather poor health the same reason answers for my being at home now. I only stayed half of the spring term. I have a pain in my head the most of the time & I find rest quite beneficial. I have had to much to do since I came home for my good but hope now that house cleaning is through with to give more attention to myself. I am but a poor peice of machinery & I think I am concious that even now the material is on the decay. My head aches so Mary I shall have to leave this until an other time. It is only in the back part that I feel the pain & that at times becomes almost numb. I never have said anything to our folks about it & ought not to have writen it to you. dont give yourself any uneasiness about it. I am quite confident of feeling better ere long. Good night Mary & may we both arise on the morrow with renewd strength.

PS You would say I had my "above" wish could you but hear father snear.

June 14th

Again will spend a short time with you, Mary. on reviewing the above I am surprised at the sickliness of the language. writing from the impulse of the moment is a bad practice for one of my temperament, but enough of this. We are to have a Camp-meeting to commence July 5th on the same ground occopied last year. Notwithstanding Rev Wallace tells me I had better run away just bfore that time, I am looking forward to it with much pleasure: he says it will be to hot for me, and the like of that. How I do love that man. yes **love** him. all of that, you know I always did. [You] know how peculiar he is with regard to dress. well he has brought a good share of the church over to his belief, & the way he & they pelt away upon me is truly astonashing.⁷² evry whare I meet him I receive chastising. It is said to be really laughable to see & hear us to gether. he so stern & sober, & of myself it will be unnessary to say any thing to you, but I make it a rule never to leave untill his phir contracts. I am surprised that he should take such an intrest in one like myself. how I wish you could have heard him pray for me two weeks ago tomorrow night. I almost played the **woman** under that prayer. Mary, I do dress plain, waring no ornaments of any description neither do I want to, but there is a certain few who have imbibed the belief that we must not ware a bit of edging & triming of any kind & because *I WILL*, believe me to be almost a monster. I think some go a little beyond the pictures [*sic*]: but having a larger cloak of charity than they, [I] admitt that I think them concencious. I am confident that in their treatment of miself they have my good in view. Delia Jeffers has even taken the fring[e] off from her window curtains now I love Delia & believe her to be one of the best of christians but I cannot see as she does about such things. I am for doing [my] duty & when I am convinced that the Lord requires such thing I hope to be found willing to perform. This will seem different to you than it would if

⁷² The campaign of Kendall and Wallace for simplicity of dress among the people of their circuit had received extra impetus on March 19, 1854, when Kendall, in compliance with the Discipline, read Wesley's sermon on dress to the Conine's congregation at Burke Hill. See Poste, "Centenary of Free Methodism," 70-71.

you wer here & heard our preaching & k[n]ew the whole circumstances. The church is far more spiritual than when you wer here. we are highly favored with ministers. there is but few like Wallace & Kendall. My heart faints within me wehen I think of Conference. I dislike the **Methodist** on this account; they are forever changing ministers.⁷³ I wish I was able to keep a stationed one of my own. now dont you laugh at this, for I am in earnest & I will tell you who it s[h]ould be. Nobody in all the world but Wallace. he seemes so adapted to my wants so capable of importing instruction. You will see plainly that I am completely infatuated. no that is not the correct term. **No** it is nothing more or less than a childs affection toward a parent. Allow me here to imagine what you will say[:] "Long is the road which has no end," & "you'l sing another song" & & Now I would not be surprised if I did get mad at him. he told me not long since that he found it nessesary to make some people *MAD* before he could do them any good. Now I am doing wrong in filling this letter with such uninteresting matter! but trusting for forgiveness for this offence will merely say that should we both live I intend to write you again in the course of the year. A new idea has just entered my craniun, which is this, that you give me a plan for my next. this a capital hit, then you will be shure of **SOMETHING** interesting. Now comes the News Girl. What will you have first in her line of business. 'Echo' answers marriages. Samuel Fergason is to be or rather was to be m[a]rried this week⁷⁴ **now** I donot think of any more. it is rather of a still time just now. How surprised I was to hear of Emilines death.⁷⁵ I did not know of her sickness untill I heard of her death I attended her funarel she looked sweet even in death. As I gazed upon her placid countenance I

⁷³ The Methodist Discipline allowed the bishop presiding at each regional annual conference to "fix the appointments of the preachers, provided he shall not allow any preacher to remain in the same station more than two years successively; . . . he shall not continue a preacher in the same appointment more than two years in six; nor in the same city more than four years in succession; nor return him to it, after such term of service, till he shall have been absent four years." *The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati, 1853), 40-41.

⁷⁴ The only Samuel Ferguson found in the 1850 Wyoming County census was sixty-five years old and already married. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 537.

⁷⁵ Emeline was Silas J. Seymour's youngest sister, about seventeen years old in 1854. *Ibid.*, 397; Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, August 31, 1973.

thought of you Mary & our last parting. God grant that it may not be our last. The text was, Let me live the life of the righteous that I may die their death.⁷⁶ Elizabeth [Chappell] Jenkins is spending the summer at home. She has a fine boy. they think of going west this fall Mr Danoldson has sold & moved to Reeds for the present.⁷⁷ Clarn Jeffers has bought & lives where Mr Taylor did & a young Mills occupies Mr Strongs place. Nancy & Lucy [Willes] appear quite w[e]ll pleased with their new mother. Mrs Jeffer's health is very poor. she cannot move her feet at all. at times she suffers much pain & then again for weeks is quite comfortable. Fathers health is quite poor. Mother's about as usual. I am anxiously watching those seeds of your or rather my plants.

Again I sit me down to write you. I had left this for father but his head aches so the [*sic*] authorizes me to write for him. he feels a little anxiety about your railroad business.⁷⁸ We hope it will be different with you than it is here. Here such property is considered of just no value at all, but perhaps yours is differently invested (You know we are not for venturing much) If you would not consider us out of place we would like to have you state more particularly about it. Now don't think us wishing to pry into your affairs. it is only a little anxiety for you & more so on account of the failure of like attempts here.⁷⁹ Father is excusable for not writing. this was not his intention until now.

⁷⁶ See Numbers 23:10.

⁷⁷ Solomon Donaldson and his wife Jane had lived next door to the Conines. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 543.

⁷⁸ Silas J. Seymour, like many of his neighbors, mortgaged his farm to help finance the Milwaukee and La Crosse Railroad, which was projected to be built through their neighborhood. When the enterprise failed, some of the farmers lost their land. Silas was more fortunate, keeping his farm though losing \$900. In 1879 he was appointed by the governor of Wisconsin to be one of the commissioners of the Wisconsin Railroad Farm Mortgage Land Company, which had been set up to dispose of lands previously owned by the railroad company for the benefit of the mortgagors. See Western Historical Company, *History of Sauk County*, 747; Ogle, *Memorial and Biographical Record . . . of Columbia, Sauk and Adams Counties*, 235; Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, March 1, 1973. Derrick Conine made no secret of his feelings about his son-in-law's venture. When Silas' father paid Derrick a visit, Derrick made it plain that he "thought that *Silas* had better let *rail road stock alone*." Naomi Seymour Morgan's postscript in Susan Seymour to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour, April 17, 1854, in Burmester, "Silas J. Seymour Letters (III)," 471.

⁷⁹ In 1834 the New York legislature incorporated the Warsaw and Le Roy Railroad, which would have operated in Wyoming County, and \$100,000 worth of stock was subscribed. After much planning and nego-

I have just returned from Mr Willes & was much pleased to find a letter from you Now do write me soon I get impatient with to long silence.

Good night Mary.
Jane.

Dont for mercy's sakes let Sailas see this letter. he would pronounce me idiotic in the extreame I send him any [a]mount of love from a bushel to a larger amount. Do write oftner. I get really vexed at you when [I] have to wait so long. One kiss for Nelly & I am done.

**Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour
with a postscript from Derrick Conine**

Perry [New York]
Oct 22 /54

Sister Mary.

After so long delay I prepare to answer your very welcome letter. I have been to busy of late to think of writing. We are now nearly through with our fruit. We had bettween fifteen & twenty bushels of Peaches & about forty of Aples to dry. This is a particular blessing of ours, always fruit enough to work to kill common people; but I will not complain; tis finished & I do not realize any meterial loss. We are all enjoying usual health. Mother expects to start tomorrow in company with Mr & Mrs Buckhout for N.Y. so you see I am to be left alone. I verily believe I shall enjoy it. What say you to spending a part of the time with me. If you are not hear by the last of next week I shall not look for you. Shall we ever meet again is a question I often ask myself. I often repair at the twilight hour to our chamber. This hour always produces meloncholy yet I think it the pleasentest of the whole twenty four. Pardon me for giving an extract from my journal written a few eavnings since. 'Tis eavning. A few stars shine clear & pale like "lamp[s] before some far off alter." The voice of the wind murmurs through the trees

tiation, however, the directors determined that the line could not be constructed within the time limits prescribed by the charter. The company was disbanded and the amounts of the stockholders' subscriptions were paid back, "less the expense." Another, more successful enterprise in Wyoming County was the Attica and Hornellsville Railroad, projected in the summer of 1850, financed by sales of stock to people along the route and at Buffalo, and completed in 1852. Beers, *History of Wyoming County*, 73.

dressed in their autumnal robes & see[m] to be telling their gay leaves a story of their frailty. Would you know Mary how that evening found me. I was living over again the days of childhood listening to kind sisters voices. Those were days long to be remembered but O! how lightly at the time were they appreciated. As I gaze upon the moon & stars they seem to me a sweet link connecting us with the absent. Not only with the living but the glorified. They are but a screen drawn between the spirits of earth & heaven. Do you ever as you look above desire to draw aside this curtain. How the sight would dim our vision; 'tis not for mortals eyes to behold. We must be content to wait our appointed time: each day leaves but the number less, soon, soon the sun will rise & set for the last time to us. O then may our immortal spirits quit with joy this tenement of clay to enjoy the bliss of Heaven. Mary I do not wish for a long life Yet I can say the will of the Lord be done. I have nothing to bind me to earth, as you have, those *TENDER* ties I never felt, but these must all be severed; how supporting in that trying hour to feel that God doeth[h] all things well. He never worketh without a purpose & his chastisements are always sent in love. Mrs. Jeffers died August 28th she bore her sufferings with great patience through nearly all her illness near the last mind & reason seemed to lose its sway She grieved much for not having set a better example before her children & before the world & sought in every way to make amends. I often think if she who had always to all appearances lived so devoted; as she neared the grave saw so much in her life to condemn, what will be the feelings of many professing godliness. 'Tis an awful thing to live Do we realize that for each thought, word & act we shall have to give an account. it is an easy matter to assent to the truth of this, but [to] feel it is quite another. Eugene Jeffres is seeking religion. his mother endeavored to obtain a promise to this effect but in vain. We hope & trust that he has counted the cost & will continue in the ways of well doing. Ezra [Jeffres] & wife experienced religion last winter. I never can be thankful enough that, that affair of ours closed as it did what days of misery I have escaped; we never could have been happy together. neither was there ever any real *AFFECTION*; subsisting between us. Rather let me live & die as I am, than form a connection with one who cannot sympathize with me; with him this would have been

impossable I speak & think of simpathy in higher terms perha[p]s than I would have done, had I never felt the want of it. Yet after all mine has not been a dreary life. There are many bright spots to which my eye can turn. It is sunday Mary. Mother is in Troy I suppose. I wish you & Silas wer here to a attend church with us. Mrs Kent died a few months since with the typhoid fever.⁸⁰ the whole family have been ill with this disease. Mr Skinner was here last week & sa[i]d that William had started to make you a visit.⁸¹ We sent you a little dried fruit by Morgan,⁸² but forgot to make arangements as to freight for which we are sorry. you have probably seen them before now. B. G. Sanford has another heir. her health is quite poor. I almost forgot to tell you this, have had two letters from uncle Henry.⁸³ he intended to have come out here if he had received ours before the warm weather came on. We have a beautiful fall roads as good as at any time during the summer. Our crop wer good this year, fetch a good price Wheat 2\$ what we have sold has come to 28\$[?]

[Jane]

I wonce more take time to rite A few lines to you to let you no that I am yet liveing my heath is good oonly I feal the effects of hard work and the effects of age⁸⁴ stil I dew all that is don on my litel farm oonly in harvest I stil have A nuf to be comfortabel⁸⁵ and expet to have wile I live if I

⁸⁰ Mrs. Kent may have been Mary M. Kent, wife of Horatus Kent of Perry Township. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 540.

⁸¹ Mr. Skinner was Jonas Skinner of Perry Township, the father-in-law of Catharine Conine Skinner.

⁸² In 1850, Silas J. Seymour's sister Naomi had married Charles Morgan, storekeeper and postmaster at La Grange, Wyoming County. They moved to Madison, Wisconsin, in 1854. [Ruth Seymour Burmester, comp.], "Silas J. Seymour Letters (I)," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXXII (December, 1948), 197n; Burmester, "Silas J. Seymour Letters (III)," 469n.

⁸³ Uncle Henry was probably Henry Conine, Derrick Conine's brother, born in 1787 and "said to have lived in New Jersey." Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, August 31, 1973.

⁸⁴ Derrick Conine was born in 1797, so he was fifty-seven years old in 1854.

⁸⁵ The value of Derrick Conine's real estate was recorded as \$2,400 in the 1850 census. This assessment was increased to \$4,000 in real estate and \$1,500 in personal property in 1860 and to \$5,000 in real estate and \$1,800 in personal property in 1870. Derrick's estate was valued at \$10,000 when he died in 1882. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 543; U.S., Eighth Census, 1860, Wyoming County, N.Y., 655; U.S., Ninth Census, 1870, Wyoming County, N.Y., Perry Township, 55; Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, March 1, 1973.

live rite and to live rite meins A gradeel [that is, great deal]
 I wold like to sea you verry much but wether I ever s[h]all
 or not is uncertain for life is uncerturn when I left you at
 atica⁸⁶ I did not much expect to sea you any more but some
 times hope revives and I think that I shall sea you wonce more
 but wether I sea you or not I hope to hear from you and that
 you ar both of you seaking to lay up A large t[re]asure not
 all in rail rode stock but in that world ware we shall nead
 nothing of this world I have not much to rite I suppose
 that Jane has rote all the nuse so that I shall ad no more
 oonly I remane stil your farther and friend all the[t] some
 think me A hard farther and that you no ful well

D Conine

PS Please to answer without long dlay.

Jane.

Jane Conine to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour

Perry [New York] Academy.⁸⁷

March 4th [18]55

Dear Brother—Sister.

I am thankful for another opportunity of writing to you. I have looked in vain for a letter from **you**—have concluded that you keep debt-credit. I suppose you would like to know whare Jane, is this winter—what her employment [is] I think that I can give you satisfactory information, for none know her better. Contrary to my most sanguine expectations I am attending school at Perry. room with Lucy W— [Willes]—Frank Jeff— [Jeffres]⁸⁸ I do not expect to remain longer than till the close of this term—which will be

⁸⁶ Attica is a town on the Genesee-Wyoming County line. At the time Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour left for Wisconsin in 1851, it was the nearest station to the Conine home where a train could be taken for Buffalo. Beers, *History of Wyoming County*, 73. For an account of the Seymours' "very pleasant trip, by water, from Buffalo to Milwaukee" and very unpleasant trip, by lumber wagon, from Milwaukee to their new home near Reedsburg, see Mary Ann Conine Seymour, "Reminiscences of Forty Years Ago," in Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 358-62.

⁸⁷ Perry Academy in Perry village was established in 1854. It was run on a nonsectarian basis for three years and then was controlled by the Methodists until the Perry public school district purchased the property in 1872. Beers, *History of Wyoming County*, 243-44; Roberts and Clarke, *History of the Town of Perry*, 112-21.

⁸⁸ Frances M. Jeffres, the youngest of Thomas H. Jeffres' daughters, is even listed as "Frank" in the 1860 census. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 536; U.S., Eighth Census, 1860, Wyoming County, N.Y., 615.

in seven weeks. I have thoughts of teaching next summer: but have no school eng[ag]ed yet I would like to be with you—to talk—advise with you; but this is not for me. no, no, I must content myself with writing.—you very well know how I detest it; but there is no other alternative Write I must; instead of talking. I receive a letter from *Em* [Conine Dorsey] a few weeks since. they wer well. Wm [Skinner] is starts for Illinois this month hanging is to good for such a man. He has reason to thank his stars that I am not his better half. I fear that I should prove a thorn in the flesh, but it is useless to boast of unachieved d— me thinks I hear you say time will show what you would (or) will do. I hope none of you are in a hurry to have me take a partner for better or for worse. Em was quite inquisitative on this point. It is a question which at present troubles me but very little: things are not as they used to was. As free as free as the winds that fly is the song of your sister Jenny. O! that I knew what position God designed me for. Thare is nothing which I so much desire as to do good, to live to some purpose. God has nothing [word illegible] thare is enough to do to employ evry moment. yet how small an estimate do we place & 8400 mo.[?] 'tis but a day: Did we but realize that each left but the no [that is, one] less, which we have to spend here, how differently would we live. When will our eyes become open to this awful trouth that eternity is fast approaching. Death is on our track, whatever we have to do must be done quickly.

Have just returned [from] the funerel of one of our students, Miss Lacy. it is not quite one week since I stood beside the cold remains of her cousin—only four since they both met with: our school—as students. The Lord has spoken,—I trust that this warning will be heeded. This world is but a port, into which some are entering with pleasure—from which others are departing with anxiety

I stayed with Nancy [Willes] last night for the last time I presume for some time to come. They have sold to Ezra Jeffres—have mooved to Cattarauguss.⁸⁹ I have had some thoughts of going up thare to teach. Mr W— has spoken for a school for me but it is quite uncertain about my going. I think that I can have the school in Mr Peltons district. they

⁸⁹ Cattaraugus County borders Wyoming County on the southwest.

wer determind that I should come last winter. Lucy [Willes] intends to teach.—Nancy to work at her trade. she sends he[r] love,—wonders why you donot write. Delia [Jeffres] is at home. Eugene [Jeffres]—Mary wer marrid last mon-day. they are [all] double now but John. Elam [Jeffres] has sold—mooved to Pike⁹⁰ he marrid—Miss Lillybridge. she was worth considerable property, but not a beauty I shure you. I had almost forgotten to tell you who Chris—r J—[Jeffres] marrid. I will do it now I may expect chastisement in your next. Miss E. [Ellen] Allen—a stranger to me—probably to you. George Coleman, is the father of two children. a boy—girl. they are mighty smart & 'tis only about twoo years since they wer marrid. if they keep on at this rate, I imagine they will have enough—to spare.⁹¹ Thare is a lot more I would like to write, but you must excue me this time.

Jane.

Do write soon. I am in an awful hurry—they girl[s] are acting like witches so pleas excuse all errors.

**Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour
with a postscript from Derrick Conine**

Perry [New York].
May, 24. [1855?]

Sister. Mary.

We hasten to reply to yours of the —. most glad would I do so in persone, but at present this cannot be. yet I still indulge the hope of visiting you, in your western home.

I am teaching in ourown district;⁹² school has been in session two weeks. I am well pleased with it as yet. Those who have had the *worst name*, have done well. John Tillon for example, seemes *exceedingly* anxious to please.⁹³ I could not expect him to do better than he has done but I hardly

⁹⁰ Pike is a township on the southern edge of Wyoming County.

⁹¹ George W. and Jane Coleman eventually had seven children altogether. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church*, II, 222.

⁹² Old District School Number 22, Town of Perry, was just a short distance east and across the road from the Conine home on Lot 12 of the West Ogden Tract in the Burke Hill area of Perry. Harry S. Douglass to Donald E. Baker, October 2, 1973.

⁹³ John Tillon may have been the ten year old son of Elizabeth and James Tillon, Jr., of Perry Township. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 528.

dare mention it for fear the spell should break. "A new broom sweeps clean." I had occasion to remind the good people of this distri[ct] of this fact. doubtless it will not be long 'ere I shall become as cross and ugly as any of [my] predecessor's. So goes school teaching. It will be one of the seven wonders if I should make a successful teacher. I am to receive t[h]e *enormous* sum of 15sh[?] per [week?]

I have just written to Catharine shame to me she has written the scond letter before I took time to answer. She seem somewhat displeased and I do not blame her

May 30.

Nearly a week has passed since the writing of the first page. Since then we have had news from the east.⁹⁴ we hope to send a draft whith this; the money we have not yet recieved neither do we know how much it will be after all expenses are deducted. Uncle Jacob charged 1\$ for what he done, then Mass. charged one cent on a dollar for the money, and what Mr Smith will ask for his services we do not know as yet. I think Uncle Jacob showed himself. Aunt Lydia has gone to Mich— to live with her children. Uncle Henry writes us that he is not so well this spring an when he was here.

Adelia Jeffres is still at Gainsvill.⁹⁵ I will send you Mary Packards address. you must write before September, for they may not be thare, after that time.

White's Corners, Erie, Co. N.Y. Mary was home this spring but I did not see her. She considered it quite unfortionate that she was not permitted to see you when you were here. Harmon Vanslyke has returned from Mich.— with a wife. dont we Perry galls feel bad? If he could not make a living before, I am afraid the[t] he will not now that he [has] a wife to support. His lady is as plain looking

⁹⁴ The news, apparently, was that someone had died and left some money to each of the Conine children. The fact that the children, rather than Derrick Conine, were the beneficiaries suggests that the deceased was a relative of Abigail Bates Conine, the children's mother. Abigail herself died in 1841. It has been conjectured that her father died about 1850. See Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 354n.

⁹⁵ Delia Jeffres was assistant to the principals of the Gainesville Female Seminary, established in 1855 in Gainesville, Wyoming County, and patterned after Mt. Holyoke Seminary at South Hadley, Massachusetts. [Harry S. Douglass], "Seminary Days at Gainesville," *Historical Wyoming*, II (March, 1949), 63; Beers, *History of Wyoming County*, 192.

as your homely sister, Jane. they inted to spend the summer here.

I received a letter not long since from Mrs. Hannah Lomis of Mich— known to you as H— Chappel of Perry.⁹⁶ She has marrid a widower with eight children. Some of them are marrid; but three or four at home. Mr. Lomis is her cousin, and worth about thirty thousand. They were engaged before she went west.

Her folks appear quite well pleased with the match. her health is about the same as when she returned here from Rochester. I should think H. was enjoying herself very well. Should her health admitt she intends to visit home next fall.

I have had my upper teeth extracted, eleven at one sitting. Say; haveent I some courage. My new ones will cost my share of the eastern property. I cannot have them before Oct. if then

I sometimes think of taking a westward trip next fall. I should have done so this Spring, but for my teeth. you had better take your money and get yourself some. I was very much disappointed in not seeing you again. I looked & look all day friday expecting father, & did not give up until Saturday afternoon. *That was to bad*, but it cannot be helped now.

Jenny. C

Please to remember that you have a letter unanswered when you receive this. Should the draft be sent with this father will be quite anxious to know if your get it or no. Tell Ellen that we have a lamb at the house & if She will come down and feed it she may have it. And that we would like to see her very much.

Your money and Clarindia[']s] will be sent together. dont let her give it to Lyme

Dear children

I take this time to rite A few lines to you to let you no that I am stil liveing and in Joying tolerabel health for me and hope that these few lines will find you in the same I will Just remind you of that rosum wead sead I want you to

⁹⁶ Hannah Chappell, like other Chappells mentioned in these letters, was a child of Lyman and Betsey Chappell. In 1855 she was about thirty-eight years old. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 543.

save for me and send to me this fol if I dont come and get it⁹⁷
I want to sea that hopato girl and ol the rest of you and wen
you get this draft you wil sel it half sent on a doller more
than the face of it if you can for the Bank took hole cent on
a doler for the draft rite wen you get it you [w]on['t] git
more on the account of the personel poperty [tax?]

D Conine

Emily Conine Dorsey to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

[*postmarked* Halls Corners, Indiana]
June [*postmarked* 14,] 1855

Dear sister:

I determined to improve a few moments in writing to
you I aught to have written long ago but have not got a bout
it. my time has been pretty well occupied this spring we
have been building a barn. this spring I have got my wool
picked and ready to send away tomorrow We are all well
Horace and folks were weell when last I saw them the[y]
were all here a few weeks since the[y] built a frame house
last summer We have quite a backward spring, it froze last
night wheat looks good now but we fear the weevil will de-
stroy it again ours wil not suffer for we have none sowed.
peaches are all destroid apples will not be very plenty

I want you to write as soon as you get this and if Fanny
[Howard, Clarinda's daughter,] is near you or you see her
tell her to write to me we want to hear how they are getting
along we want to know if you have any more family and of
your health. is your throat well I often think of that. if
you do not find time to write soon I want Silas to write we
are always glad to hear from you; John has scolded me for
not writing to you before and said he would for he wanted
to hear from you We wish you could come and make us a
visit this fall. We would enjoy your company very much
Mary Delucia would be happy too she often wishes Cath-
arines children [were] here again she talks every thing

⁹⁷ Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour seem to have been keeping
the entire family supplied with rosin. Silas' mother wrote in 1854:
"We are much obliged to you for the rosin-weed gum and bark. I think
they were both beneficial to your father's health." Susan Seymour to
Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour, April 17, 1854, in Burmester,
"Silas J. Seymour Letters (III)," 468.

plain and might go to school but she likes her liberty too well and she is most to young. we have a school house right under our nose[,] a meeting house a mile distant we have preaching once in two weeks and sabbath school every sabbath. have you any privalege of meeting I cant think of any thing more now so good by for the present

Emily Dorsey

Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

School Room. Perry [New York]

July 8th /55

Dear. Sister.

I had concluded that you had given up writing, just as all the rest have, but I am happy to be convinced to the contrary Well, I declare, another girl.⁹⁸ I'd speak for something else next time. I pity you, that so, but then you always liked children. of course one would like their own! thats naturel! I spose! I like good, smart, pretty children, but then, I should get tired of them I know. I have some, just such, here. I can endure them at school but, when they throng around me after I have whalked a mile or more, & I feel just like sitting down in one corner, all alone by myself, tis then that I think of Job, & wonder if he ever taught school & boarded around. By this time I suppose you have a little anxiety to know where I am, training the young idea. It is Mr Jacksons dist. It is a very small school, & I have only twelve s[h]illings per week. I do not average over nine [scholars], though I number tirteen brain & brainless. ho, hum, I always, put the worst side out when writing. Now the trouth is just this. I do like teaching, but I dont like boarding around. I intend to be differently situated if I live, & teach another season. I dont know whether the dis. like me or not, & I dont care much. I do the best I can, & if they want to find falt the[y] may. (a privilege which people ingeneral improve.). I never felt so indipendent in any thing I ever attempted, as in teaching. They wanted me in our school, but I told them plainly that I never would attempt to govern children that wer not governed at home. That is I would not go into such a school if I knew it but if I was once in, I presume I should usu[r]pe

⁹⁸ Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour's second child and second daughter, Ida Jane, was born March 2, 1855. Ogle, *Memorial and Biographical Record . . . of Columbia, Sauk and Adams Counties*, 235.

my authority. The second week of school, one of my little girls told me that her mother said, if I puinished her she would take he[r] out I never had [met?] her dear ma but I ventured, to send her word to this effect, that I governed my own school, & further more if her children need punishing she might expect that they would get it. They are here today & I don't borrow any trouble about their future appearance. I have been teaching nine week & have not whipped one yet, but *I* think that I have quite good government. I let my eyes do what they can. these are going to spoil my market I expect, for evry body is afraid of them.

school. room. 10 P.M.[sic]

Having but three schollers this morning I find time to write. I shall have more during the day. yes, here comes some just now. val, val. Only six weeks more & I shall be free again. I think of attending school next winter. probibly at Perry. I have had an invitation to spend the winter in Cal [Cattaraugus] with Lucy [Willes]. Nancy. I look for them down [in] September, when we will determin where we will go. I hae been with them, so much, since you left, that I find it painful in the extream to be seperated. we keep up a monthly corrispondence. I wish you could read some of their letters. tis a feast for me I asure you. O! Mary, were it not for friends I should be a *very unhappy* mo[r]tal. I am thankful that I do not inherit our Fathers suspicious feeling. I am ready, to count all as friends untill they prove themselves, contrairywise. I thank God, that I was born a sociable being. I love society, I love to have friends & to prove myself a *friend*. I would not give much for life were it not for friends. I never saw the time when I felt that I had more than at present, but then those I love most dearly are far away, & today I feel lonely & sad. Report says, that I am to be marrid this fall, but it is not so, or at least that is not my *present* intention. O! Mary, how I do wish you were here. there are somethings which I so want to say to you. you are the only one to whome I would dare tell them. Nancy, Lucy, enjoy my confidence *almost* without reserve, & it is not for lack of confidence in them, that I would shun at present to open my heart, to them. no, no, but then, I *cannot* I *must* not. yet I have not a doubt, but what it would be for the best, for me to do so. Now I ought not to have written this. forgive me

Mary. Dont, try to conjecture what it is, that seemes just now to rest with weight upon my mind. your conclusion would be erronious, I am sure. perhaps I may tell you sometime.

School Room. 5 Cl. PM.

It is my practice when circumstances will admitt, to spend the time from four untill six at the schoolhouse I enjoy these seasons, very much I have a great deal of writing to do, & I usually spend this time in that way. I sent two letters last week & have three to write this week. Emily & Cat. have not a word to me in more than, a year; if they can stand it *I* can, but I am inclind to think, that I should not bear such treatment as gracefully, from you. I had begun to be almost provoked, but your letter proved sufficient to restore me to good humor again. Uncle Henry spent nearly two weeks with us in June. he looks & appears something like Fathe[r] but he talks *th[r]ee* times as much! he is real funny. I feel quite anxious to go & make him a visit. Now if I was only RICH, wouldent I travell, but it is all right. the Lord knows what is for our best good. We have not heard from aunt Lydia in sometime & do not know how she is going to arrange buisness. Hannah Cappel is in Cleaveland, Ohio. I think I wrote you that she had fell & hurt her. this brought on her old complaint. the institution is closed at Ro.[Rochester] but her physician there advised [her] to go where she has gone & she is receving considerable benefeit, is able to walk again & &. Delia Jeffres, is living at home, & is one of the most examplary persons I ever saw.

yours, in haste.

Jenny

Aunt Polly Pelton is marrid, they say to a man as singular as herself Gloria Willis has captured an English man; this is about all that I know about THEM.

Mother often speaks of you. you was her favorite you know. She is extreemly good to me this summer. I hardly know how to account for it. We would willingly save Peaches if [we] were going to have them. the cold winter almost destroyed the trees, & there is not a Peach to be seen. I donot know of any for miles around.

I received a call today from Mr. Hira[m] Crouch. he has been attending school at Perry, & report says, that he intends to be a minister. I love to laugh at him about it just to see

him blush.⁹⁹ Father & mother are usually well & are disappointed as well as myself in not being privileged to look for you in the fall.

I intend to come out to see you sometime, but I think it doubtful about my coming next fall. Now it is not because I would not like to, you know it is not, but I don't see how I can. Hope. O! thoue companion of my life what would I do without thee. Yes I hope to see you Mary, & spend many happy hours in you[r] society

Emily Conine Dorsey to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour
Scipio [Township, Allen County, Indiana]
Aug, the 11. 1855

Dear sister M.

having a few leasure moments I will improve them by writing a few words to you. I am happy to say we are all well as yet there is a good deal of sickness around us. We have had an uncommon wet time & it is now come off dry which causes it to be sickly we never new such a rainy time corn is almost ruined by it & a good deal of wheat injured after it was cut. Bad times for farmers.

You spoke of emigrating. if you were coming here I would like to encourage you for your society would be very agreeable we have only one little chatter box and don't think of having any more. I think it strange that you have such feavers after your confinemet it must be owing to bad management from hired girls or unskilled physicians we have many more doctors than good ones Jonathan's wife came very near loosing her life by bad management she was kept sweating until her feather bed was wet through and the straw was musty they sent for another physician who said she must be kept cool and get up a good many times in the day and she soon began to amend.

I have not heard from Catharine for some time and cannot expect to until I answer hers I was sorry they wer not

⁹⁹ Hiram Crouch, son of Hiram and Ann Crouch and brother of Asenith, "had a remarkable conversion in early life, and while amid surroundings of prevalent spiritual darkness . . . and was clearly led into the experience of entire sanctification." He joined the Free Methodists in 1863 and, despite financial hardship and a series of crippling accidents, preached in Pennsylvania, Colorado, and New Mexico successively until his death in 1910. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church*, II, 64-67; U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 541.



CATHARINE
CONINE
SKINNER



CLARINDA
CONINE
HOWARD



JOHN
HAWKINS



JANE
CONINE
HAWKINS



EMILY
CONINE
DORSEY

These pictures of Clarinda Howard and Emily Dorsey were incorrectly captioned in the December, 1973, *Indiana Magazine of History*.

content to stay here where we could see them. William lost considerable by selling and is content to follow the plow again. Cath. makes a better clerk than housekeeper. I suppose you ment Fanny H. [Howard] by Francis. if so she must be a good scholar and teacher and you tell her that her aunt Emily would like to have a letter from her. Lydia Buckhout and Sarah are married¹⁰⁰. I dont envy their husbands their happiness. Horace and folks are well, their children all attend school but Alace.¹⁰¹ Mary is trying her hand at cheese making this summer.

I have made 6 cheeses and intend making more soon we milk 5 cows. cheese 10 cts. butter 12½

I am trying to spin some but it gets along slowly. I have about 28 lbs to spin and weave for I have bought a loom, so if you want your weaving done just bring it here and I will try to please you.

Silas you have not written a word to us for a long time. I hope you do not forget us. we are always glad to have a few lines from you. it makes you seem more like a brother and friend. I dont know but you have written last. if so you are excusable. You must be building a very large barn or else lumber is dearer than it is here. ours cost 250, and we think that dear. We have got our barn pretty well filled with hay and oats. it has been worth a good deal this wet summer. I dont know how any body gets along without a barn as the saying is

From your sister
Emily D. Dorsey

**Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour
with a postscript from Derrick Conine**

Perry [New York]
Nov. 9th /56

Sister Mary.

It is not for want of inclination that I have thus delayed to answer your letter. For a few weeks I have been so much

¹⁰⁰ Sarah Buckhout, like Lydia, was a sister of Horace Conine's wife Mary and a niece of Derrick Conine's wife Betsey. Lydia married William Taylor and moved to Nebraska. Sarah became the second wife of Elisha Whipple. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, February 12, 1973.

¹⁰¹ Alice Marian was Horace Conine's fourth child. She was born in 1852. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, March 15, 1973.

engaged in necessary employment so as to have not a leisure hour for writing. I am sorry to disappoint you, & I assure you it is with no small degree of reluctance that I give up the thought which I had so fondly cherished for months past; of seeing you this fall. They had spoken to me about teaching here again this winter before I received your answer. after that I was quite undecided & but had I known at that time of some one that I could have had for company, I should have come. I have learned to day that Mr. Sheldon is down. I can not begin to tell you how I feel. if I had not engaged to teach here I *would come* without fail, but I have promised to commence next week. O! dear I do not believe that I shall enjoy myself one bit this winter. I don't like teaching a district school, & for this reason, I have to much care. If I could [have] one of the situations which you spoke of I think it would suit me far better. Mary I do intend to see you next spring if I live. my heart is set on it. In the meantime if it will not be to much trouble & & I would be very grateful if you would find out what could be done. I am afraid Silas will think I am to presuming, that he has business, enough of his own to attend to, & I would not blame him if he did. I sometimes think that I was borne purposely to make other people trouble. if so you may expect your share if you have not had it already. Father is not at all well this fall. he does not complain much & has done all his work, but time has not passed him unnoticed in his flight. He speaks often of Ellen I guess we should all be glad to see her. Permitt me here to tell you what all my friends say & father among them of my comming to you. "That I will not come back, [']Miss['] Conine." So look yo up some nice good Swain to be in readiness. he must be *rich* remember, rather tall light complected blue eyes, brown hair & lastly though not least of all he must be PERFECTLY TEMPERATE

I think we have some reason to fear a congestion of the brain after the great mental effort made in writing the above.

I think father will write some so good by.

P.s. Tell Ellen that we have one of the nicest kittens, if she will come down here she may have it.

Jenny C.

I will send you some Garlic seed. I have been sewing again since school closed, have earned 21½ \$[?].¹⁰² How I do dread this winter. I have no id[e]a that I shall teach more than three months. I wonder at their wanting me at all I am informed however that it was a unanimous voice
Dear children

as Jane has left A smal peas for me I will rite A few lines to you so you m[a]y no that I am A live and in joy tolerabel health I did think s[o]m[e of] A comeing out ths fol but have given it up I supose you wold like to no how my seller is with appels this fol I have A boout three bushels I raised seventy bushels of weat rathe[r] smal crop but I have unuf so that I can pay my tax and I Dont ow any boddy

Mr Sea more has had his hous burnt but has got lumber he[re] the last time he was he[re] and the nabers is goin [to] help him bild another lost all wen you rite Send A few more of them sead if you please grate far in perry G [Judge?] smith is sed to have lost ten thousan his hole block is burne[d] an A num ber of others hae lost all it look haret [that is, horrid?]¹⁰³

D Conine

**Horace and Mary Buckhout Conine
to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour**

Newville [Indiana]

Jan. 11th 1857

Dear Brother & Sister!

I received yours on the 9th and hasten to write a few words in reply. I don't blame you for scolding me but as you

¹⁰² Jane Conine had previously worked as a seamstress, living with various families for whom she made clothing. See Jane Conine to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour, November 30, 1851, in Baker, "Conine Family Letters, 1849-1851," 363.

¹⁰³ Fire broke out in Perry village on Saturday, September 20, 1856, burning a shoe store, a jewelry store, a "photograph car," and a drug store. Five days later fire struck again, destroying eight stores, the post office, the Perry *Times* newspaper office, two lodge halls, and two residences. Arsonists, or "incendiaries," were blamed for the fires. The village history notes that the "loss of buildings was mainly with Rufus H. Smith, who carried no insurance." Judge Smith was probably the village's most prominent citizen, having been interested at one time or another in a flouring mill, a carding mill, a saw mill or two, a foundry, and a grist mill. He erected a block of business buildings in 1857. Several of the others who lost everything in the fires were young men who had recently begun in business. Roberts and Clarke, *History of the Town of Perry*, 54, 55, 60, 65, 70, 74-75, 253, 286-88.

said sickness would excuse me Mary has suggested that I plead as an excuse having had the *fever deliric*; it is rather a *slow* fever but nevertheless quite difficult to remove. We are well, so are Johns folks I arrived at Mazomanig just at dark the day I left you, lay by over night at Janesville & reached home Thursday morning without any accident more than running over a cow Since the Rail Road from Fort Wayne to Chicago is completed, I could go in half the time it took me¹⁰⁴

When I reached home I found the corn ripened with frost I had about 100 bush. poor corn & 300 not so poor. Corn is 35 cts, oats 35, wheat 1,00, pork 6,25 per C, hay from 8 to 10 dolars a ton. As this is the third letter I have written to day you must acknowledge that my fever has somewhat abated and also excuse me for not writing more. Remember me to Lyman's folks. tell them I *intend* to write to them

Sincerely your friend & Brother
Horace Conine

Dear Sister

As Horace has not quite filled his large sheet I thought I would scribe a little We can not boast of our sleighing. the snow is some 4 inches deep, and the weather not very cold We got a letter from Julia last Sunday which brought us the sad intelligence of Fathers death¹⁰⁵ His disease was Putrid Erysipelas¹⁰⁶ he was sick two weeks. Julia said He seemed perfectly reconciled

You said you wished we would come up and spend New Years day with you I guess I would have liked it as well as you would. But just think how we are scattered. I hardly

¹⁰⁴ Rail connection between Fort Wayne and Chicago was established in 1856, but the traveler had to make connections on three separate railroads to accomplish a journey between the two cities. The Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad was completed that year as far west as Plymouth, Indiana. The Cincinnati, Peru & Chicago linked Plymouth and La Porte, whence the Michigan Southern & Northern Indiana could be taken on into Chicago. Rail connection from Chicago to Mazomanie, Wisconsin, via Janesville, was completed in 1857. See Frederic L. Paxson, "The Railroads of the 'Old Northwest' before the Civil War," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, XVII (2 parts, Madison, Wis., 1911), Part 1, 260, 262-63, 272-73.

¹⁰⁵ Julia Buckhout was a daughter of Philip Buckhout and sister of Mary Buckhout Conine. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, Wyoming County, N.Y., 418.

¹⁰⁶ Erysipelas, also called St. Anthony's Fire and in one form Black Tongue, is an acute infectious disease of the skin or mucous membranes. It is characterized by local inflammation and fever.

think we shall be so lucky as to take dinner with you this winter. I dont believe you have got such a mischevious Boy as we have.¹⁰⁷ to begin with this morning he broke a plate, turned over a pitcher of sour milk climbs on all the chairs, and aint a year old and now stands crying at my side, so Ill quit

Yours Affectio[n]ally
M[ary Buckhout] Conine

**Jane Conine to Mary Ann Conine Seymour
with a postscript from Derrick Conine**

April, 15th [*postmarked* 1857]
Perry [New York].

Sister. Mary.

Gladly do I improve the present opportunity for writing you. I intended to have done so long before but have been postponing not knowing where I should be this coming summer. I believe it is now decided that I teach here at home again. They spoke to me about teaching long before the winter term closed, but I thought then I would rather go somewhere else. Thare being no favorable opening, I am here, that is if I suceed in getting my Passport.¹⁰⁸ The County Commissioner who fills the place of Town Superintendents, after visiting my school last winter, advised the trustees to keep me as long as they could. Notwithstanding, I have barely an expectation that I shall pass. On an appointed day all those designing to teach, that is in one town meet & are examined together. We are to meet the twentieth of this month, so ere these lines reach you my fate will be determined

¹⁰⁷ This was Horace and Mary Buckhout Conine's fifth child, Arthur Howard Conine, born in 1856. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, March 15, 1973.

¹⁰⁸ By passport Jane Conine must mean a teaching certificate. Prospective teachers were examined by the appropriate public official—the township superintendent of common schools between 1847 and 1856 or the county school commissioner after 1856—and were issued a certificate if judged competent to teach. See Carl H. Griffey, *The History of Local School Control in the State of New York (Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No. 683; New York, 1936)*, 60-61, 126-27. Mary Ann Conine's husband Silas J. Seymour taught school in New York for a few years before he moved to Wisconsin. A certificate form in the Conine-Seymour Collection, with Silas' name and the date October 15, 1842, filled in, attests that he was "well qualified, in respect to moral character, learning and ability, to instruct a Common School . . ." A certificate for another teacher, with exactly the same wording, was printed in *Historical Wyoming*, V (May, 1952), 95.

If I should feel as independent as I did whe[n] he visited my school I probibly shall pass. After praising me quite as much as I think was allowable, he remarks "Her confidence will always secure her success." All that prophesy are not *true* prophest. I presume that you have heard that I was to be marrid this spring. it was beleived & anxiously waited for by all far & near. They tried hard to convince me of the supposed fact, but for some reason it seemed quite to big a pill for me to swallow. I told them I would try to beleive but they must forgive me if I did not succeed for my faith was certainly very weak. Now they hardly know what to think though all unite in saying that I might if I would.

To YOU Mary i'll not deny but that thare is some trouth in the last assertion but to say that such *are* or *have been* my intentions; I cannot. The gentleman inquestion, is about twenty eight years of age, good standing in society, good principals a miember of the Presbytirian church, is worth not far from fifteen hundred He is said to look very well. All I have to say on this point is, & which will be the same as describing him to YOU, he is just the reverse of what I have pictured to myself. however that is not my objection. My views at present are these, that we never should think & feel alike. *He* is ve[r]y quiet, unassuming; infact my counterpart in evry respect. Such a contrast as would remind one of the Eagle & the Dove. What say you Sister Mary are you in favor of such a union; think you it would result in mutual profit? after having seriously canvassed the subject please favor me with your decision. Father says do just as you think best. I do not feel at present like having one of those, *untiab[l]e knots*, tied, when thare is no real affection on my part. I would not have you think that I am looking for perfection in a companion. I have faults of my own & consequently would not if I could be united to a faultless one; but I do think did this subject receive its due attention; was reason allowed to govern instead of passion, much of the misery which now seemes inevitable might be avoided. We can scercely take up a paper at the present day unless our eyes are greeted with one or more paragraphs of divorcement. And to what are we to attribute this state of things, does it exist where thare is sympathy of feeling; where thare is union of hearts; far from it. 'tis only where the conubial yoke has proved to galling where the man pulled one way & the wife the other. Deliver me from *Such* a yoking.

I shall expect to hear from you soon.
Father will write if he has time.

Yours &
Jenny

The individual referred to here is a brother of the girls that I roomed with when you were here. I will try and send you the Garlic seed.

Don't refer to my affairs unless you do it on a separate slip of paper. For father thinks he must read all your letters. Neither must you mention it to Naomi [Seymour Morgan] or any of them it might get back before I should like to hear it. I thought I would tell you just for the fun of it. Mother don't know any thing only that he has been here sometimes.

Dear children

It is through the kind protection of the Lord that I am alive and able to write to you a few lines. I have not much to write but don't think so much of this world that you forget [you] are mortal and must die like all others for folks die here all the while and going to judgement and I expect soon to leave to die no more. Try to meet me on that better land where parting will be no more for I don't expect to in joy the society of you any more in this world. I may possibly see you and I may not. I want to come out but whether I shall or not is uncertain. But write when the rail road is through to Delton¹⁰⁹ and all about the route and it may possibly in time meet [o] start but for me it is hard leaving home. I will add no more. I remain your farther and pretended friend

D [C]onine

Derrick Conine to [Mary Ann Conine Seymour]

[1857?]

I received your letter which was a consolation to me to hear from you if I can't see you. I am well as come for me we have had a very pleasant winter and have a lot but wheat I have none. I had 8 eakers and got 8 bushels of wheat and ches¹¹⁰ this year. I sowed none so the weevil can't eat it

¹⁰⁹ Delton is a township of Sauk County, Wisconsin, just east of Dellona Township where Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour lived.

¹¹⁰ Chess is a type of brome grass.

up"¹¹¹ I stil dew wat litil is done my self but that is not much as my children has all bin so lucky to gat so far of[f] that I cant sea them any more and thay will not be troubeled with me I have made up my mind to live as easey as I can ef I can dew anuf to pay my tacks so I can ceop [that is, keep] th[e] old place to stay on you rote that liman [Howard] want ed to go to minasoty. tel Clarrindy for me never sel that place if she has got the Dead of it un les she wants to suffer the rest of hur days Jane is to Horace is and ses she is going to stay thare this sumer and I think likely longer I want to come out and sea you and your fine cantry but all uncertain but one thing try to remember that it tis not all of life to live nor all of death to dy but thare is a heavin to gane and a hel to sone [that is, shun]¹¹² I ad no mor so fare well my children I want to sea them litel ones

D Conine

we had no f[r]ute last year I had perhaps ten bushels of apels

Jane Conine Hawkins to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

Winchester [*postmarked* Sandy, Ohio].

May 29, 1858

Dear Sister.

I embrace the present opportunity with pleasure to address you. If I have figured right however, I think I am not in your debt; I can hardly remember when I have heard from you, sometime last fall I think. I hope that you, & yours are well, truly health is one of the greatest of blessings; you have heard probibly ere this of my adventures; but perhaps it might not be amiss for me [to] inform you that on the fourth of April I was marrid to John Hawkins, of Ohio. Mr. H. is a miller. We left Ind—a few days after we were marrid, & came here, or rather to father H's, where we remained about two weeks, then, left for N.Y. we reached home in safety & found all well. We made but a short visit, as it seemed needful for us to be here. Our goods came safe & we have

¹¹¹ The midge, or wheat weevil, appeared in the Genesee Valley of New York, of which Wyoming County is a part, about 1845. Ultimately the ravages of the insect led to the almost complete abandonment of wheat, which had been the chief commercial crop of the area. See Neil Adams McNall, *An Agricultural History of the Genesee Valley, 1790-1860* (Philadelphia, 1952), 151-53.

¹¹² See footnote 65, above. Verse five of the hymn prays: "Teach us that death to shun" which leads to the "eternal horrors."

been keeping house nearly three weeks. Mr. H. owns a grist, & saw mill, also five acres of land & house. We have quite a pleasant situation, not quite half a mile from town. There are six trains through here in a day, depot not quite half a mile, from us. Our house is not very large, but then I think it will answer our purpose. we have two bedrooms, one quite large so that I have two beds bureau, wash stand &[c] in it & there is plenty of room to moove about besides. we have also a parlor & kitchen & last though *not least*, I [have] one of the kindest of husbands. we have enjoyed ourselves well so far & I trust that the future has many bright days for us. How I wish you would all come & make us a visit.

Remember me to Silas, & Clarindia & family. tell Ellen that I saw that one eyed cat when I was at home. how glad I would *be* to see your children.

Please to write soon. dont put it off a single day.

Yours.

Jane E. H.

Direct to, Sandy, Columbiana Co. Ohio.

Emily Conine Dorsey to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

Scipio [Indiana]

June 11th 1858

Dear brother & sister

With pleasure I improve a few moments writing to you. we were very happy to hear from you. I received a letter both from father & Jane at the time I received yours. Jane had just returned from Perry but had not received her goods; she said they had painted and papered their house anew, & had got lots of furnature I expect she will *out-shine* us all. She should have some good things for we think she is wonderfully cheated in her man we disliked the match wonderfully and tried every means in our power to break it up but you might as well undertake to move the Alps, have him she would. Old Mr Skinner advised her to have him but no one else. She was married at our house. Horace was so mad he would not come to the wedding and I could not have felt much worse to have buried her. He has alway been engineer and that is all he knows I should want to have him run the mill both night & day for his absense would [be] more agreeable than his presence. She has an idea that he is agoing to be rich. his father pretendes to give him 1,000\$ but we do not

think so Unless he manages better than we did while here he will soon run out of custom¹¹³ every one disliked him for being so overbearing you must take this letter for a match after you have read it I hope our worst fears will not be realized we will hope for the best. Jane did not teach last winter I had 20\$ a month had as high as 57 in a day, plenty of business but a very pleasant time. Our school is not worth much this summer Horace was here yesterday they are all well. William Skinner was here not quite two weeks ago he is getting rich we are only in the shade and expect to be while we have such seasons as we have had for awhile and this beats all previous seasons people can do nothing it rains every other day and some of the time two & three days at a time it does not appear as though corn could come to any thing this year. poor people will suffer for they can get no work.

It will be wonderful [l] bad building unless it comes off [f] dry pretty soon we expect the carpenters soon. I am in hopes we can get it to live in next winter for our house roof is very poor indeed if it had been a good season we would have had it all done nice but the rains have made the roads so bad that it will be almost impossible to get to any place and John's health is very poor. he will not try to work much after the house is done he would be quite comfortable if he was able to live without work. Our dairy is quite small only three cows we lost 2 last fall and winter and sold the rest to build with butter 10 cts, hardly worth making. I have 36 lbs of wool to spin this summer.

You say Clarinda thinks we do not care about her but she is mistaken neither H. . . nor I know where to direct a letter to her if Mary-Jane will write and let us know where to direct I would be very glad to hear from them and will answer all her letters¹¹⁴ I would be glad to see you all but the prospect is poor for us Mary can read in the 3rd order an spells in the first class but cannot sing a single tune She is quite tall which makes her look older than she is.

Good by for the present write soon

Emily D. Dorsey

¹¹³ Emily Conine Dorsey is here using the word custom in the sense of patronage or trade.

¹¹⁴ Mary Jane, often called "Jennie," was the fourth child of Lyman and Clarinda Conine Howard. She was born in 1846. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, March 1, 1973.

Jane Conine Hawkins to Mary Ann Conine Seymour

Harlen [Indiana]¹¹⁵

Dec 22, 1861

Dear Sister.

While sitting here all alone this evening listening to the pattering of the rain as it comes against the windows, I be-thought me of your unanswred letter & I immediately arose got paper & ink, &&. now for a chat with you my ever pa-tient sister Mary.

It is not often that I am alone of an evening, but John was anxious to go to church; so I find myself with no com-panion but my little boy of four & a half months I will not attempt a description of him, for like evry other mother I am partial to my own little ones We had him to church to day for the first time save one. he did not much fancy the music, & I guess thought he could do as well himself & indeed he sang a *delightful chorus*. One old shouting methodist sayes that he is sure he will be one of the noisy crew. Horace thinks he will do for a minister & &. pardon me for writing so much on this subject, remembering that one bright bud was suddenly transplanted to a more genial clime¹¹⁶ there-fore it is with the greater anxiety that I watch this *little one* his name & then I am done. Clarence Merton. have I stolen from you?¹¹⁷ well then you may pay the forfeit. any thing nice

Horace was here last week to mill I see him & Emily quite often & I expect them all here next sunday as it is quartly meeting.¹¹⁸ how I wish you could be with us. just

¹¹⁵ The town of Harlan was platted in Springfield Township, Allen County, Indiana, in 1853. In 1859 John Hawkins erected the Maysville flouring mill there. This John Hawkins may have been Jane Conine's father-in-law, who, it seems, sold out to his son and a man named Anderson. See Brant & Fuller, *Valley of the Upper Maumee River*, I, 351; [T. B. Helm], *History of Allen County, Indiana . . .* (Chicago, 1880), 175; George W. Hawes & Co., pubs., *Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory, for 1862 and 1863* (Indianapolis, 1862), 117.

¹¹⁶ Jane Conine Hawkins' first child, a daughter, died in infancy. Ruth Seymour Burmester to Donald E. Baker, March 1, 1973.

¹¹⁷ Mary Ann Conine Seymour's third child, Merton Eugene, was born in 1858. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ In the nineteenth century, quarterly meetings were conferences of the preachers, officials, and leaders of Methodist Episcopal churches within a small geographical area. These conferences had general oversight of the "whole temporal and spiritual matters of the charge." Matthew Simpson, ed., *Cyclopedia of Methodism: Embracing Sketches of its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition, with Biographical Notices and Numerous Illustrations* (Philadelphia, 1878), 739.

come & make us a visit this winter. Times are very dull here. when will this [civil] war end & what will BE THE END. a great many have gone from here. several have died with the camp fever & a number more are sick. our two last regiments are in Kentucky. they are expecting a hard battle there soon.¹¹⁹ it seemes hard to think of the suffering & distress, which a few aspiring men have already caused & but little prospect of a speedy termination, of our difficulties.

My love to all. write soon;

Jane E. Hawkins

Derrick Conine to Silas and Mary Ann Conine Seymour
[postmarked Perry Centre, New York]
April the 1 1863

Dear children

I reseaved your leter wich was a grate consolation to me to hear that you was well we [are as] well as comin but I sea that I fail and can dew but litel the old peopel of my age and thare abouts are most all gon¹²⁰ we have had A verry pleasent winter I s[h]old like to sea you all wonce more but that is verry uncertain I am glad that [Lyman] howerd has started one more plan to get rich and I hope he will succed this time I have forgottin wat county they live in so [when] I rite I will rite to you and you hand it to them tel hur that I wold like to sea hur verry much but my mind has be come so that it is hard to compose any thing to rite and tel them grand children that I often think of them and wold like to sea them the[y are] all un none to me

Derrick Conine

¹¹⁹ The Thirtieth Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment was organized at Fort Wayne on September 24, 1861, under Colonel Sion S. Bass and moved to Camp Nevin, Kentucky, on October 9, 1861. The Forty-Fourth Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment, under Colonel Hugh B. Reed, rendezvoused at Fort Wayne on October 24, 1861, and crossed into Kentucky at Hendersonville on December 11, 1861. Although the year 1861 ended without the anticipated clash in Kentucky, both of the Allen County area regiments soon saw all the action they could have desired, the Forty-Fourth at the seige of Ft. Donelson in February, 1862, and both units at Shiloh the following April. [William H. H. Terrell], *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana* (8 vols., Indianapolis, 1865-1869), II, 299, 438-39; John H. Rerick, *The Forty-Fourth Indiana Volunteer Infantry: History of Its Services in the War of the Rebellion and a Personal Record of Its Members* (Lagrange, Ind., 1880), 20-23.

¹²⁰ Derrick Conine was sixty-six years old in 1863.