



EMILY WELLS WRITES TO GRANDMA

Emily Wells was born in 1824 in Richmond, New York. In 1834, her entire family, including her parents and seven brothers and sisters, traveled on the Erie Canal to Buffalo, New York. Then they took a steam ship across Lake Erie. Eventually they settled in Lenawee County, Michigan. Her father bought land and settled into the community. In 1836, 12 year old Emily and her father wrote to her grandmother, who still lived in New York. Emily was very excited to write to her grandmother and shared lots of details about her life.

Below is an excerpt, or a part, of the letter Emily wrote to her grandmother.

Clinton (a town in Lenawee County, Michigan), February 4, 1836

Dear Grandma.

It is with a great deal of pleasure I attempt to write you a letter. I hope you will excuse me for not writing you before. We all want to see you very much. We all attend school. We have an excellent Teacher, Mr. Carter. Pa thinks he never went to a better school. We like living in Michigan very well. We should like to have some of our Richmond mates here. Tell cousin Caroline we would like to have her call and stay over night with us, see how she would like our log house. We think it is quite nice and it is much better than our neighbors have. We have two good fireplaces and an oven. It is very warm and comfortable. There is not a frame house within two miles of us and but very few brick chimneys in the neighborhood.”

As for our journey, we enjoyed it very much. We passed through many pleasant villages. I think Lockport [New York] is a very pleasant place. The locks [of the Erie Canal] were a great curiosity to us. I like riding on the canal very much. Much better than on the steamboat.

Lafayette [one of Emily's brothers] sends his love to you and Grandpa and Cousins Robert and Cyrus. He says he should like to have them here to go a hunting. He thinks Grandpa would like to kill a deer and Robert a turkey. They have been very plenty here this winter. Please tell Aunt Sibyl that we find the fur cape very comfortable as we have to go four miles to church. We have had but very little snow here this winter and very cold weather.

Ma sends her love to you and to Grandpa. She says she would like a little of your applesauce for tea. I remain your affectionate [grand]daughter, Emily G W

Emily's father also wrote a letter to his mother.

An Excerpt from James' (Emily's Father) Letter

Clinton (a town in Lenawee County, Michigan), February 4, 1836

My dear mother. I will fill up the space that Emily has left in writing a few lines to you. We are very anxious to see you and my father but fear we shall not very soon. I wish father to purchase a barrel of dried apples and have them ready to send by next spring.

I shall look for father and Cyrus in this country next summer. (Note: Cyrus is James' brother) It is very healthy here. No sickness scarcely of any kind. I have not had a turn of the asthma since I have been here. The children are all fat and healthy. I do not know that our family have been sick a day since we have been here. Land prices are rising very fast here. Tell Cyrus he must come soon if he wants to purchase a farm. I hope you will come up with them next summer.

I am your affectionate son. James B Wells.