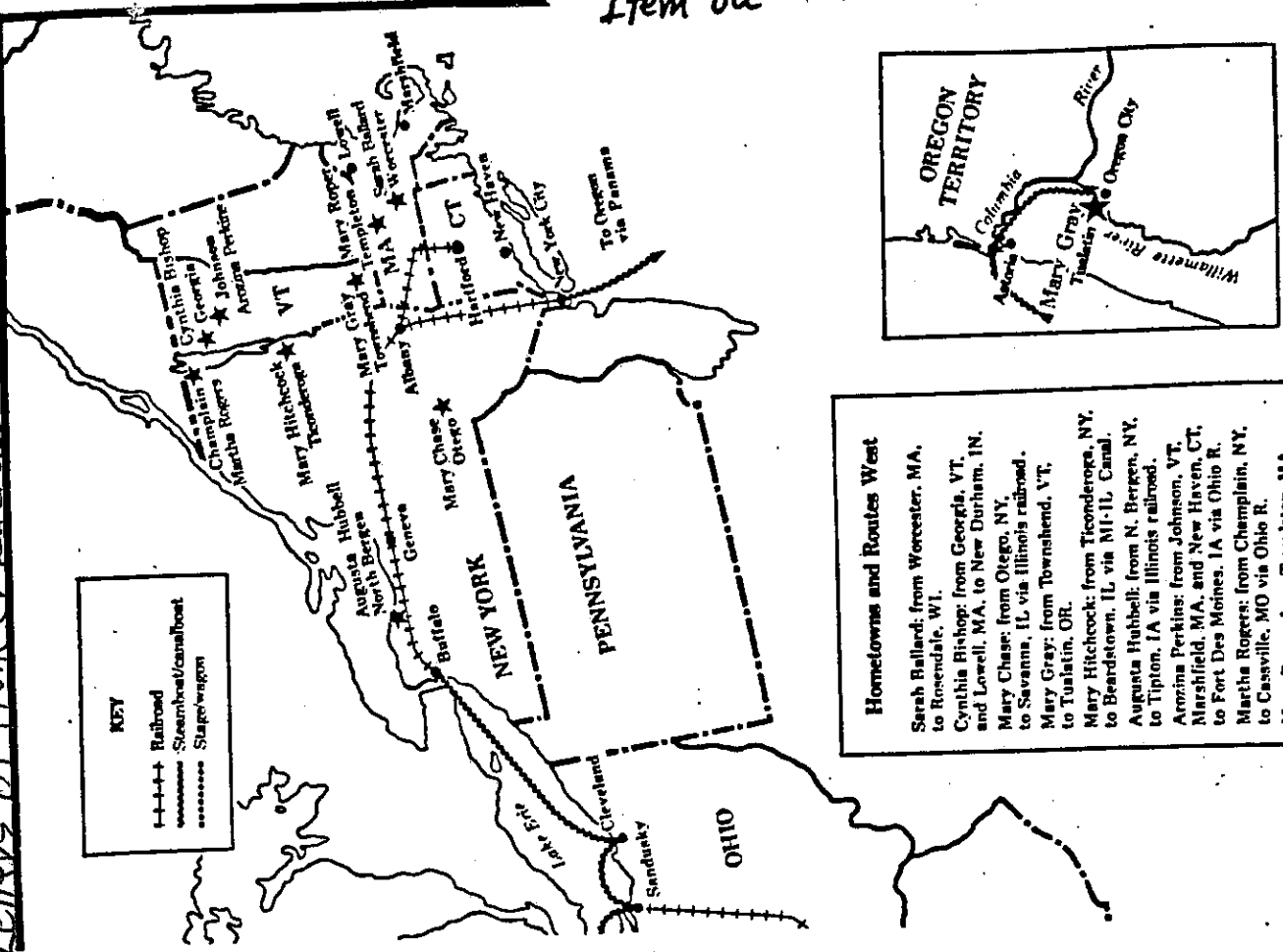
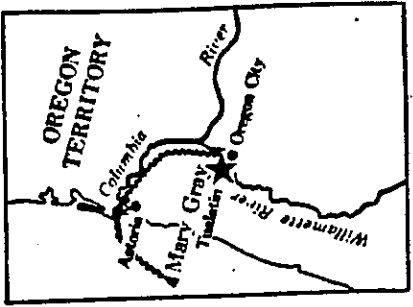


Letters of Pioneer Teachers

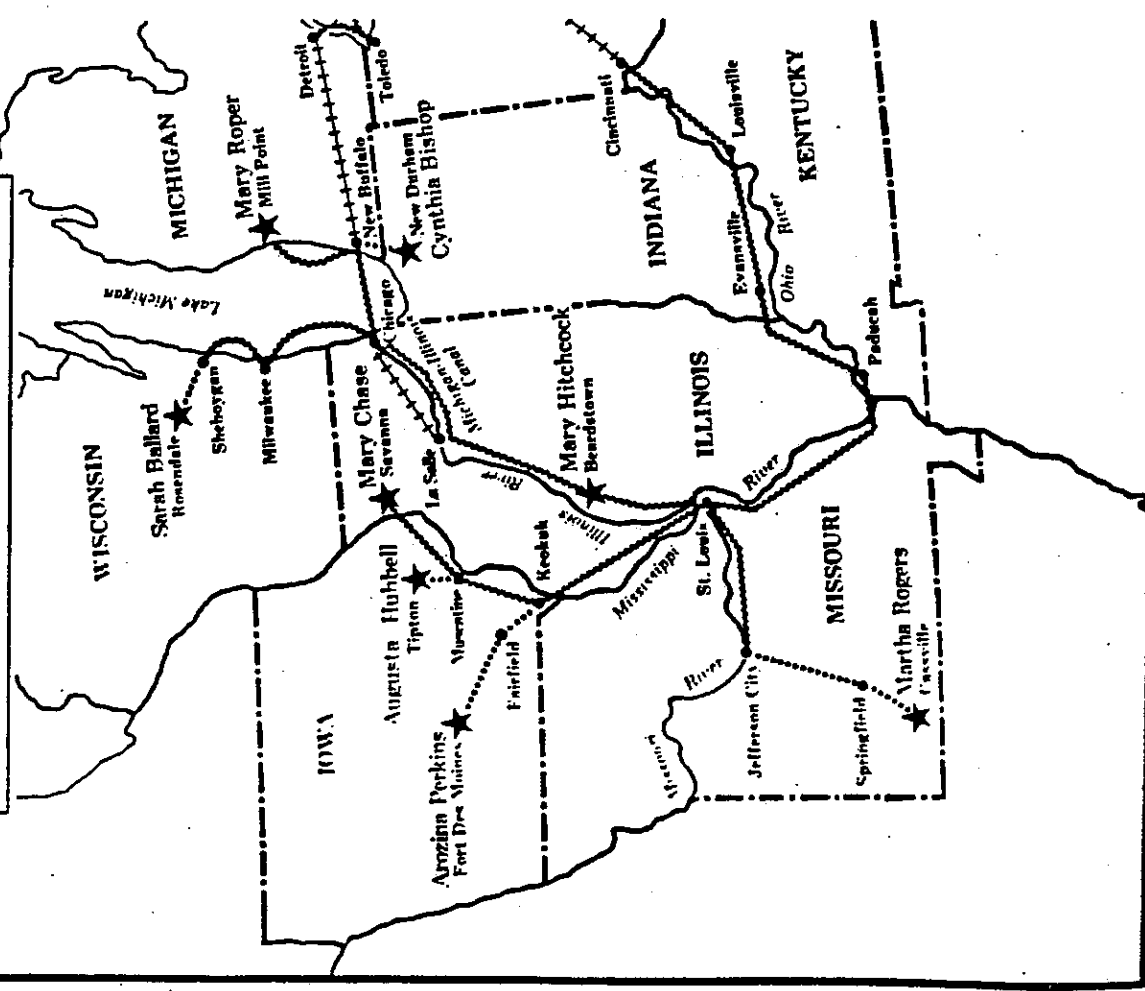


KEY
 - - - - - Railroad
 - - - - - Steamboat/canalboat
 - - - - - Stagecoach

Hometowns and Routes West
 Sarah Ballard: from Worcester, MA, to Remondale, WI.
 Cynthia Bishop: from Georgia, VT, and Lowell, MA, to New Durham, IN.
 Mary Chase: from Otego, NY, to Savanna, IL via Illinois railroad.
 Mary Gray: from Tushnet, VT, to Tushatin, OR.
 Mary Hitchcock: from Ticonderoga, NY, to Beardstown, IL via MI-IL Canal.
 Augusta Hubbell: from N. Bergen, NY, to Tipton, IA via Illinois railroad.
 Arzina Perkins: from Johnson, VT, Marshfield, MA, and New Haven, CT, to Fort Des Moines, IA via Ohio R.
 Martha Rogers: from Champlain, NY, to Casaville, MO via Ohio R.
 Mary Roper: from Templeton, MA, to Mill Point, MI.



**Journeys West
 Pioneer Teachers, 1848-1854**



From Polly Werts Kautman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1984)

Martha Rogers came from Champlain, New York, on the border of Quebec where her father, a farmer, had remarried and had a large new family. Little is known about her background except that she had taught "more or less for eight to ten years" when she applied to the National Popular Education Board. She could speak French and had taught among French-speaking people. She was a member of the Presbyterian Church in Champlain. Her letters cover the period when she was between twenty-eight and thirty-two years old.³

Her wry comments on Cassville, Missouri, a county seat and political center in a slave state, offer the reader a view of conflict in a frontier town that approaches the stereotype. Her spirit unwittingly fired up a political rally and she described a knifing on the public square with all the detail of a Western novel. Possessing a restless temperament, Martha Rogers taught in three places in the Ozarks during the period her letters cover. In each case, she used active teaching methods and held successful public examinations. She comments on the religious revival held in her area and was particularly gratified that one of her young women students was converted at the camp meeting.

Both Cynthia Bishop and Martha Rogers were dedicated to temperance. When a student used Bishop's school post-office box to ask why men got drunk, she used the question as a springboard for lessons on the dangers of alcohol. She attributed the poverty of a family in her school to the father's drinking. Martha Rogers laid the blame for a murder of a prominent lawyer in Cassville on drinking and also saw it as a major social problem.

The later life of neither Cynthia Bishop nor Martha Rogers is known, but it is easy to imagine them teaching for a long time in the West, probably moving frequently. Cynthia Bishop is listed as a teacher in Lafayette from 1853 to 1855. When the Indiana school law was declared unconstitutional in 1854, the city of Lafayette was forced to close the public schools and rent them to teachers who conducted them as private schools until they reopened as free schools in 1856. It is probable that Cynthia Bishop left Lafayette during the controversy, but both her family's location and her adaptiveness point to a future in the West. She resigned from the Lowell Baptist Church in January of 1855.⁴

Martha Rogers returned home for a visit and traveled back to Missouri with the class that left Hartford in the spring of 1853. She used her sister

3. Martha M. Rogers, Champlain, New York, 10 November 1849, applications folder, NPEB Papers; U.S. Manuscript Census, 1850, Clinton County, NY, p. 484; letter from Carlton C. Wu, pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Rouses Point, NY, 8 December 1981.

4. General R. P. De Hart, *Past and Present of Tippecanoe County, Indiana* (1909), vol. 1, p. 499; *Biographical Record and Portrait Album of Tippecanoe County* (1888), pp. 3104-05, supplied by Sarah E. Cooke of the Tippecanoe County Historical Association, Lafayette, IN; note from First Baptist Church, Lowell, MA, December 1981.

teachers from the board as a support network by keeping up a wide correspondence with them, giving us the opportunity to follow the experiences of some other pioneer teachers. In the excitement of events in Cassville she wrote in a stream-of-consciousness style, omitting periods and paragraphs. It has been necessary to bring sentences and paragraphs to a close and to eliminate repetitious sections in order not to obscure her narrative. Her two letters from Cassville and the last two of her letters from Erie are included here. The events described in her three letters from Colonel Love's School in Wright County and her first letter from Erie are summarized. Some detail and repetitions have also been eliminated from Cynthia Bishop's letters.

Cynthia M. Bishop from Georgia, Vermont,
and Lowell, Massachusetts,
to New Durham and Lafayette, Indiana

New Durham, Laporte Co., Ind., July 23, 1853

My dear Miss Swift,

Considering the very kind interest you have taken in my welfare and usefulness I fear I have done wrong in not writing sooner; but trust you will excuse me.

I arrived at this place, Thurs., May 5th & was met by Miss Flynt, with whom I spent one week.¹ During this time I had the offer of two schools, one of which I could not refuse if I had tried. They were so fortunate in their application. They had heard accidentally last fall from Miss Flynt that she expected a teacher friend from the East, & ever since had watched for my advent. I was amused by their confidence that they would have a good school if they obtained my services, though it made me fear lest I should, in the result, lower their estimate of eastern teachers. The principal actor in engaging me was the Hon. C. H. Cathcart, late a member of Congress. I board at his house which with its furniture & arrangements is that of a plain, respectable farmer. He sends four children to me—the oldest a girl of 15. I have two other girls of a similar age & the rest of my pupils are of all ages from five to thirteen.

I find them rather backwards on account of seldom or never having a well qualified teacher. It is only seven years since the first school was taught in the district & they have been taught only part of each year.

1. Elizabeth E. Flynt was from Tewksbury, Massachusetts, and went out to teach in New Durham in the spring of 1850, where she started the first school. She later joined Bishop in teaching in the first public schools in Lafayette.

To Dr. H. H. ... Human Teachers of the Frontier (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 171-101

I hope you will pardon my saying I was amused, but I really suppose I am the best qualified teacher they have had & I believe not a word of fault is found with me, at least I hear of none.

I do not know *how* to write about the school at present, so that you can, as it were, see it, but I shall have to put down my thoughts as they occur to me. I open the school in the morning suggested by yourself, though I have practiced nearly the same before. I stated to Mr. Cathcart & Mr. Flood, the trustee, when they came after me, that I would use some religious means in school, & stated, briefly, my own sentiments. This I did with perfect frankness, & before I knew anything of the sentiments of these gentlemen, I found them perfectly willing I should do as I pleased, though it seems that neither of them usually attend public worship. I was glad when I found this to be the case, that I gave them my views at first.

None of the Cathcart family are professors, & I believe none of Mr. Flood's. There are several professors in the district, however, all of whom belong to the Methodists. Many of the children attend a Sabbath School, some three miles distant, & in order to give some Spiritual instruction to those who cannot go, I proposed to meet all who chose to come at six o'clock p.m. on each Sabbath, & I spend an hour in appropriate exercises. . . .

I believe you wished to hear about our daily labors in the school. Before commencing it, I called on every family accompanied by Mrs. Cathcart, & the people seemed pleased with the proceeding. I think the influence of it good.

I have not adopted your plan for the exercise *fully*, but I have a particular time for every class & in *much* the same order as you proposed. I have the children read first after prayers, & then hear two classes in Arithmetic before recess. After recess the little ones read again, & then the two largest classes, & then a half hour for writing closes the forenoon session.

I have an hour & a half intermission, then the little ones read, classes in Peter Parley's & Mitchell's Geography⁶ recite, the older scholars spell, & we have a few minutes to devote to miscellaneous exercises, which have excited so much interest that they have been willing to *shorten* the recess as a means of *prolonging* them. This I do not do, except occasionally.

After recess little ones again, then Grammar, which my three largest girls study, then I give some assistance in Arithmetic, hear Tables & sing to close. One of the most important events which take place in school (i.e. in the estimation of the pupils) is the opening of our Post Office—a box in which

6. Peter Parley's tales and readers ranged from primers to story tours of the world. In his tales about Asia, he devotes several chapters to missionary Sarah Judson, who died in Burma. Peter Parley was the pen name of Samuel G. Goodrich. DAB, vol. 4, pp. 402-03; *The Tale of Peter Parley about Asia* (Philadelphia, 1836).

they drop written questions on any subject which interests their minds. The questions are various, & sometimes require preparation in order to answer them. They have sponges to wipe their slates with—& the question is deposited "where does it come from," &c. We are about to have a new schoolhouse built, & they ask (& I cannot tell them, though I guess the Puritans, at Plymouth) "who built the *first schoolhouse* in the New World?" And the last time I opened it, I found the query, "what do men get drunk for?" I told them I would talk about it sometime—I hardly knew what to say, lest I should not make as strong an impression as I wished in favor of temperance, so I have borrowed Miss Flynt's drawings of the drunkard's stomach, & shall show & speak about them next Monday.

What can I do to help this cause? Would that I knew, for the father of one of my large girls, who *has* pretended (it must have been pretence) to preach the gospel, sometimes loses the dignity of *man*, by the use of alcohol. If I could receive any light upon my duty to an interesting family in their circumstances, I should be glad. The man received five thousand dollars, it is said, with his wife, some eighteen years since, & with the advantages then offered here, might have been worth ten times that amount or more, yet they are now so poor that people wonder how they manage to appear respectably. It is thought that they could not if none but honest means were ever used. I say this trusting that it is not too much to *whisper* to you if I could, & ask you how I could save the children,—a son of fourteen, who will enter my school bye & bye, if I stay,—from dishonestly getting what is not his own—for it is said he will pilfer orchards—& perhaps other places—& it is believed is secretly *allowed* in it. The oldest girl is an interesting one. I want to see her qualified to teach, but I have some misgivings about the family. I have written freely, but it is to Miss Swift, so I know all will be as it should be.

Mr. Cathcart has sent & bought a ten dollar set of maps for the use of his children & the school; they are beautiful & the pupils are much pleased. The scholars noticed that the *largest* countries on each map were colored *yellow* & the query *why* was put in the P. O.

I think I have improved as a teacher in consequence of the instruction received at Hartford. I feel the need of more of the same high order, when, as I often do, I find it difficult to make my large girls *love* Grammar. They were put into it by unskillful teachers at nine and eleven years of age, & have *learned* it by rote enough to disgust them, & that is all the *good*, but not all the *evil* it has done. I think we are gaining slowly. . . .⁷ I have governed the school without using the rod thus far, though I sometimes think it would do one or two rogues good, who *forget* quite too often what they admit to be *right*.

I do not know whether I had better remain here some time, or go into a larger school. I have only twenty scholars, but shall have more soon. I engaged

7. The paper on which the last part of this sentence appears seems to be worn.

only for one term, but I believe they are intending to keep me as long as they can. They are able to pay me well, & I do not know as I shall be exacting, if I stay, in asking the \$150 per year. I suppose I should have had that if you had given me a location. I like the country, & enjoy good health, though my eyes have been sore, & are quite weak now. It is almost mail time & my only chance to send this for three days.

Yours affectionately,

Cynthia M. Bishop

Miss Nancy Swift

Lafayette, Ind., May 16, 1854

My dear Miss Swift,

In much haste I snatch a moment to write you. I want a word of advice, & wish I had written a day or two sooner.—

The long-looked-for day for the opening of the public schools in this city is now near at hand; probably will be two weeks from yesterday, May 29. Myself & Miss Flynt are expecting to teach in the grammar schools.— We, as you know are Baptists, ~~two or three~~ others of the ~~gen~~ lady teachers engaged are Congregationalists or Presbyterians, & ~~two more~~ are members of the Methodist church. How many of these are impressed with a sense of obligation in regard to religious influences in school, I cannot say.— Other teachers are Universalist or—*nothingarian* perhaps; our Superintendent is a Pennsylvanian—was brought up a Quaker, his wife still says "thee & thou" & I have no evidence that he will *desire* even if he tolerates the use of the Bible & prayer in the schools. He *may* not oppose—the directors would not, probably, but the impression seems to be that in order not to exclude the Catholic children from the schools, it will be considered *not best to use the Bible at all there*. You know, my dear Miss S., that it must be a hard question for me to decide how I ought to act under these circumstances, especially as I am to conduct a grammar school in a quarter of the city where Catholics are most plenty. I think that if the superintendent & directors were all pious and prudent men, who felt the need of Christian influence in this city, that we could carry out our wishes without any serious trouble with either parents or children. But they (the directors) seem to fear to stand firm, & as near as I can learn, the superintendent cares nothing about it.

I did not waver in my design to read the Bible at the opening of school until a day or two since, when I talked with one of the teachers, a Presbyterian, & one of the very *best* of the teachers elect, & she said she thought we could accomplish more good by giving way in *appearance*—not reading the Bible, &c., so as not to frighten the numerous foreign children away—but we could give oral & apparently accidental religious instruction

in such times & ways as to excite no tempest.— If she, who is a resident of this city & a very pious, well-educated lady, thinks so, do you wonder I hesitate as to my duty?— Some say to me, Ask the superintendent if he will approve it, but if it is duty I dislike to ask *permission* of man—Another, the wife of a returned missionary tells me to open my school as I wish, making no allusion to the fact that I am *aware* of any difference of opinion in others, & as though considered it a matter of course.

Now, if I know my own heart at all, I wish to do what God would have me in this matter, that which, in the end, will result in the greatest good.—If you were within a short distance, so that I could visit you, it would be a *comfort* to go to your feet & sit down to be instructed.

If this letter reaches you in the time it ought, will you not sit down & answer it briefly, so that I may know your mind before Sun. May 28; & please write some suggestions how I had better *vary* or *carry out* my forms of proceeding, if I should have *commenced* before I receive it, either *with* or without my customary religious exercises, I *hope* I may get it *before* the schools *begin*.

The opening session will be very short, perhaps seven or eight weeks, & in Sept. the school year will commence.

We are in tolerable health of body, but do not, especially myself, enjoy that spiritual health so desirable in our station.

We have got to meet the superintendent within an hour, & spend most of the day in school exercises which is my reason for writing so hastily. I *must* put it in the next mail.

I will write again more deliberately soon so that the Committee can know how we are situated.

If you cannot consistently answer this—so be it, but offer one prayer that I may not make false steps. I will try to do my duty as far as I know it.

I shall teach the scholars the golden rule & many other Bible precepts, whether I tell them where I found them or not. This I can do at all events.

Yours with affectionate respect,

Cynthia M. Bishop

Miss N. Swift

Lafayette, Ind., Aug. 21, '54

Dear Miss Swift & Ladies of the Committee,

I will now, after some delay, report myself to you, but as I am spending my vacation at the sick & probably dying bed of an esteemed Christian friend, a clergyman, you will excuse the hasty & informal manner in which I write. Miss Swift will pardon my repetition in this letter, of what I may have communicated to her in a private note.

I came to this city last fall to take charge of a select school for girls, which had been established two or three years, intending if it pleased me & seemed best, to continue it. It was to remain during the winter term under the nominal control of its founder, & I was encouraged to think he would make some effort to assist me in finding rooms for it to occupy after that time, or such assistance as he might be able to render; but I found that it was of little use to look for aid from that quarter, & my compensation being very small, with much difficulty in governing, (which I find has ever attended private schools in this place), I at once concluded to enter the public schools where I could depend upon being supported in having order, &c. The Trustees told me the school houses which they were building would be finished in May, so I thought I would wait six or eight weeks for them. But the builders were so negligent my "carrying time" was prolonged until June 27th, when the graded schools, the first of the kind in this city of 9,000 inhabitants, were opened, creating quite a pleasant interest among some of the citizens. The schoolrooms are ten in number, in three buildings, & into them are crowded from seventy to one hundred and four seats apiece. The houses are of brick & well built, but the rooms are not large enough for the seats put into them by one fifth.

The schools were suspended at the end of four weeks on account of very hot weather & the alarming prevalence of sickness, some cases of cholera, &c. We expect to open the fall session Sept. 4th. So you see I have had only one month's regular employment in five. If I had known that the houses would be so long in preparing I would have tried to find a place for a school to occupy, & taught. *Schools* enough were ready for me, but a place a *decant* school-room was almost impossible to be found, therefore I hope I shall not be considered censurable.— I love the Society whose agents you are, & would fain help on its objects, & carry out its designs in my little sphere.

The schools are classed as primary, intermediate & grammar departments; one of the latter is under my charge. I had about forty pupils enter during the short session, but expect seventy five this fall, of ages ranging from ten to twenty, male & female, many of whom have never had a good school to attend before. *Do pray* that I may have grace & wisdom equal to this arduous responsibility. Is it not a great work to begin a systematic course in such a school? How can I succeed? The superintendent is not a religious man, & though he inculcates good morals, does not wish to have us use the Bible in school. He seems to fear that sectarian prejudices, of the Catholics principally, may be aroused & the Trustees are about of the same opinion. A part of the latter are men who "care for none of these things" either way, & two of them are evangelical professors, but are so timid or something else that they fall in with the rest.— I was determined never to ask permission of men to read the word of God, so I spoke to the Supt. (Mr. Naylor from Penn.) just before the schools opened, & told him my views of duty & asked him if it was his

intention to use any means to prevent the teachers from acting their own judgment & pleasure in this matter, saying that I inquired for the sake of knowing what to depend upon; that my course had been & would be the same, in substance, wherever I went; & that if the performance of what I deemed a sacred duty was to be the means of trouble with those who employed me, I wished to know it then, as there was other situations to be had & I must go where I could act freely in the matter. I addressed him with perfect good nature, but with decision, in presence of another teacher & he replied, "Miss Bishop I do not wish you to leave, you may do as you think you ought to, I will make you no trouble."

But in my school are some Catholics, & there are many in the neighborhood who would attend if the priest would let them alone; so in view of all circumstances, instead of taking the Bible directly into school, I wrote off selections on the natural & moral attributes of God & our most prominent social duties as well as the great duty to love & worship Diety, & read them, offering a short extemporaneous prayer. I get the pupils to sing a verse or two when I can, but they are backward in this as in every thing, & being an inefficient singer myself, I find it hard to get along. Yet I am determined to persevere & we shall soon do better. . . .

Last winter I did not feel that I had so good an opportunity to do as I now have. I have not received a saucy word from my pupils in the public school yet, not has any one persisted in disobeying. They have never been accustomed to strict order & I did not "draw the reins" very tight as the weather was so warm & they were not used to confinement, but we hope to improve this fall so much that we should not be ashamed to have you visit us any day. I can truly say that I never loved any school as I do this at present & I think most of the pupils are well pleased with me. I have never spoken a cross word in my new school room & hope & pray that I never may, yet I expect to be a tolerable disciplinarian. "Who is sufficient for these things?" May I feel that you all pray for me? If I fail it will do more than to injure me. My pupils will suffer & many others.

I do not, cannot say that I enjoy religion personally—I have no pastor this summer to counsel or encourage me in the little trials & vexations which have continually beset me; it has been difficult to find comfortable rooms or accommodations for myself, most of the time, without paying an extravagant price; I have been dealt rather unfairly with & cut short for means; & have given way to hard & repining feelings. But our church expect a pastor soon, & if things brighten up I shall probably try to make myself contented here, if the school prospers. I must say that I have been lonely & homesick owing to the above circumstances, but hope is now in the ascendant. I think if I were situated in a smaller place—a small village perhaps—that I should enjoy society better than in a city of the peculiar character which this possesses.

up." Rather gaining in flesh. Love to dear Miss Ferry & any other friends. Excuse haste as I am needed at the sick bed very often & must do some of my writing *piecemeal*.

Yours with much love

C. M. Bishop

Martha M. Rogers from Champlain, New York,
to Cassville, Waldo, and Erie, Missouri

Cassville Barry Co. Mo. July 5th-50

Dear Miss Swift

Considering the length of time that letters occupy in going from here & also the change in my location, I have concluded to write. It may perhaps be too soon to tell definitely as to my *continuance* here—but not too soon to tell the past & present. . . .

At Buffalo we parted with our northern division the last day of Apr. amid tears, good byes & such things. Gov. Slade took thirteen of us to the boat about seven at night after having paid our fare to Cin[cinnati] & given us our allowance for the remainder of our route as he was to leave us that night & go on to Chicago with the others. And after much kind affectionate advice, not forgetting his voluminous motto "Modest pretensions & Great works," left us alone, as Mr. Maltby had taken the night before with Misses Plimpton & Washburn for Cleaveland & would join us next day.¹⁰

The lake [Erie] was so rough that we did not stir till morning. It was still rough & short seas & the consequence was that every body were sick & all our company excepting Miss Ladd some more, some less. Misses Kilgore, Brooks, Taylor & myself were among the worst. So we lay all day groaning. It was a clear bright *May Day*, but not very 'joyous' to us. Miss Kilgore laugh & cry by turns to say if she "had only know this she never would have been caught on that *dreadful* lake." Miss Brooks, & Miss Taylor—"O, if they

10. The Reverend Benjamin K. Maltby of Cleveand was an NPEB agent who escorted teachers across Ohio. Charlotte Plimpton of Hopkinton, Massachusetts, went to teach in a girls' school in western Pennsylvania and Mary Washburn from Burlington, Vermont, was going to teach in Henrietta, Ohio. *Third NPEB Report*, 1850, p. 17.

11. Abby D. Kilgore of Topsham, Maine, was headed for Mooresville, Indiana, where she became the second wife of James S. Kelley, a successful merchant. Harriet N. Brooks of Dalton, New Hampshire, married Ranselver Winchell in LaHarpe, Illinois, in a few years. Emilie Taylor not only joined Martha Rogers's class in 1850, but went out again in the fall of 1853 to Boonville, Missouri. She apparently went with her sister to Missouri the first time. She eventually returned to Hinsdale, New Hampshire, where in 1857 she married the Reverend Moses H. Wells. Mary Jane Ladd from Meredith, New Hampshire, married in the West. An alumna of Mount Holyoke, she married William T. Hatch within the year in Henry County, Indiana, and died in 1861 at the age of forty-six.

The Ladies of the Committee may be pleased with a word of explanation in relation to the last remark, therefore I will tell how the place appears to me. *Backward in intelligence*, as may be seen by the fact of its reaching the present size before building a public school house or supporting schools; *nothing to boast of in refinement—money*, which is the great object of pursuit, seeming to be the main passport into the "first circles," in which many persons move who are any thing but well-educated; & the continual coming & going of strangers rendering the newcomer an object of *cold criticism* to stated residents here, rather than of friendly interest. I do *not* love the *place*, but as I do love my *school*, I think I may become better pleased after a time.

My salary is \$300 per annum, which I think *too low*, while board is higher here than in Chicago or Cincinnati, but I shall not accept so small a remuneration for so hard a place next year. The people, no doubt, really think it good wages.

I should be very happy to receive suggestions from any of the Committee, or of other intelligent Christians respecting my past or future course in relation to the *use of the Bible* & religious influence in school. If *truth* prevails I am content.

Yours affectionately,

Cynthia M. Bishop

Dear Miss Swift,

A word more to you. Miss Flynt remained here waiting until June 20th when the hot weather brought on some of her difficulties afresh, & she left for Glen Haven Water Cure⁸ in N. Y. Dr. Jackson examined & prescribed for her & then she proceeded to her home in Maine for "home treatment." This is successful, as she soon began to "gain rapidly," as she expressed it some four weeks since. I have no later news from her, but expect it every day, & rather expect her back in two weeks to enter the schools. But she is to teach in the school which the Supt. mostly directs, &, of course, will not be allowed to use the Bible. She has had to govern *alone* so long that she wants to avoid the responsibility, partially on account of her health. Miss Maynard is about to leave for Mississippi.⁹ She taught with the Supt. the four week session but does not like to remain, though all persons interested were well pleased with her as a teacher.

My health remains good, not a sick day in Indiana, i. e., not to be "laid

8. For a description of the water cures so popular with women in the nineteenth century, see Sklar, *Catherine Beecher*, pp. 206-09.

9. Laura Maynard taught in New Durham between 1853 and 1854. A native of Potsdam, New York who attended Mount Holyoke, Maynard went West with the spring class of 1852 to Bellemonte, St. Louis County, Missouri. She married Franklin Flint in 1859 and died in Denmark, Iowa, in 1908.

Brooks & Grosvenor stepped off of our boat on to another just started for the upper Miss[issippi] so that they were not detained at all. We went to the City Hotel & next evening took boat for [because] Mr Emerson was going up the Miss. & would not be back till the next week so we came on alone. When we got into the Mo. we had a "right smart chance of snags, sawyers & sandbars" & we also had the pleasure of getting on the sandbars several times. We reached Jefferson about one P.M. Sat 11th. There parted with Miss Taylor who went to Boonville.

There I waited two days for the stage. Tuesday morning took the Stage at one in company with three gentlemen. . . . I was three days coming from Jeff City to Springfield rising at one in the morning & riding till seven & eight one night. I rode one day in company with a gentleman who was in the Stage last fall when Miss Sawyer came out & showed me the spot where they upset & he remarked that she was a woman of a strong mind for she made no fuss at all when they upset.¹³ The last day of the trip was performed in a rough lumber wagon 45 miles & I was tired out when I got to Springfield.

Mrs. Emerson received me very kindly and did all she could to make me comfortable. Soon after tea she told me not to feel bad but that Col. Love had engaged a teacher for the summer session but that she doubted not that I could soon get a School & that I was very welcome to a home with them till I found a Situation. But it all could not quell the rising of tumultuous feeling in my heart so far from home & friends, the people all strangers & everything so strange & different from all that I had been accustomed to that my heart died within me & when I went to bed that night tired weary & sad, I felt that there were some very rugged paths in this journey of life that we are travelling. I arose next morning sick in body & mind & I finally had to give up & be sick three days.

But my case soon excited the sympathy of the people & all were ready to assist me in any way & gentlemen would call & offer to write wherever they were acquainted & showed me every attention. When I had been there a week Col. Love sent me word that he was sorry he had engaged a teacher since I had come & that he would feel under obligation to employ me in the fall. He pretended that it was because he had not heard from the East & thought that he would not get a teacher before fall. . . . But I suspected that was not the real objection & I got it out of his son in law [Mr. Lee]. Mr. Emerson became obnoxious to them last Feb. through a letter of his that was published in the Jan. No. of the "Home Missionary" not intended for publication. This came to Springfield just about the time of the Benton excitement & the cry was instantly raised that he [Emerson] was a Abolition-

15. Ann E. Sawyer from Franklin, New Hampshire, went out to teach in an academy operated by R. D. Smith in Pleasant Retreat, Polk County, Missouri, in the class immediately preceding Martha Rogers's. She was twenty years old and had recently attended Mount Holyoke Seminary for two years.

could only see home again they would never be seen on that lake" but poor I was too sick to even wish to get well. Indeed I had but one thought all day & that was "O how sick." We got to Cleaveland about seven O'clock at night when Mr. Maltby came on board & began to doctor us with brandy & some of his spicy jokes which latter in connection with the Lake becoming less boisterous proved highly beneficial & the next morning with the exception of a light head & very empty stomach I was well but not so Misses Brooks & Taylor. They were sick two or three days after.

We got into Sandusky about 8 O'clock in the morning & took the cars at five for Cin. At about seven we left the Wilkinsons at Belvue.¹² The Rev. Mr. Waldo was there to receive them. We than rode on till after eight before we got any breakfast & we were *right* hungry to be sure. It was ten O'clock at night when we reached Cin. the night of the opening of Burnet House. The next day Mr. Maltby distributed us on three different boats. The four going to Ind. left at noon. Misses Brooks, Grosvenor, Ela Taylor & self took boat for St. Louis—And poor Miss June like the "Lone Star" to which she was hiring took boat all by herself.¹³

I would say here in explanation of our being out on the Sabbath—we found that we must be out one Sabbath either on this river [Ohio] or the Mo. And after looking it all over & considering how far some of us had yet to go Mr. Maltby concluded that it was best for us to go. Misses Brooks & Grosvenor were very reluctant to go & took care to remind us all along the route that we must bear Gov. Slade's displeasure for they were innocent to which we humbly acquiesced probably feeling that Gov. S. was too good a man to let his wrath continue after sundown, & that it could not reach us so soon in this far off land. . . .

Our boat kept us *waiting* one day & after taking on a cargo of babies (twelve in all), they left about nine o'clock in the evening. The next morning about seven, we left Miss Ela. We had a pleasant time & got to St. Louis the next Wednesday about three P.M. I sent my letter up to Dr. Ballard & about an hour or so Mr. Emerson came & said he found there was no boat going up the Mo. that night & we must wait till next evening.¹⁴ Misses

12. The Wilkinson sisters, who first went together to teach in Bellevue, Ohio, eventually went separate ways. They were in their early twenties and were probably the oldest daughters of a Brandon, Vermont, physician. Mary married Emerson Corvel within the year and Caroline went on to teach in Tennessee.

13. No information is available about either Miss June or E. C. Grosvenor. Martha Rogers's letter is the only reference to Miss June, who appears to have gone to Marshall, Texas. E. C. Grosvenor did write a letter in the "Regeneration" folder of the NPEP Papers on 23 March 1850, but it contains no information other than her name. She was apparently assigned to teach in Iowa.

14. The Reverend Mr. Emerson of Springfield, Missouri, was part of Governor Slade's network. He had requested a teacher for Colonel Love's school from the board and apparently offered his home as a way station for teachers coming to Missouri.



The log schoolhouse in Berry County, Missouri, was the last to be built in the county. The design remained unchanged from the time Martha Rogers taught in the same county forty years earlier.

And I must not forget the Schoolhouse which is a log house thirty-five by thirty with four windows & two doors, the south are boarded up & in the four windows of twelve panes each there are ten panes of glass. The cracks are filled with mud plaster & there is no "loft" & the shingles are very holey so that when it rains we take the books up & stand in one place till it begins to drop down & then we move to another spot & then another. . . .

For a week after I came here I thought I would have to quit because I could not find a spot to put myself till I hit upon this place. . . . I have the best room in town. It's lathed & one coat of plaster put on about as well as I could put it on I should think. There is a fireplace in it two windows with curtains a closet on one side of the chimney & shelves on the other for books. The lower one being broader serves for wash stand & toilet stand. There is a door that opens on to a piazza 70 feet long & it faces the court house, grocery & one of the stores.

I commenced School Monday the 7th of May with sixteen scholars. At the end of the week I had twenty two & the next Monday I had twenty five & this week I have twenty-nine & they say that more are coming. But the difficulty now is a schoolhouse. Some want to build one but the majority are so inert that they come for nothing & I am now telling them that I will stay if they build such a House as I want but in that thing I will not stay. . . .

There is no congenial society in this place, not one. The doctor with

ist & of course ought not to be suffered to live.¹⁶ So they stopped him from preaching & then they said he was distributing Abolition Tracts & then the old Col. [Love] got it into his head that he [Emerson] wanted to get Abolition teachers in the country to poison the minds of the young so he would have none of them. They might all go together for they were all alike.

I told Mr. Lee after he had told me this that he could tell Col. Love that the Society did not mean to send teachers here or anywhere else that did not know enough to mind their own business & that if he should want a teacher in the fall he had better send to the Society for one. Mr. Emerson laughed after the man was gone & said he thought the old gentleman would feel bad when he found what a "peert" teacher he had lost. . . .

Miss Sawyer's Mr. Smith came ten miles out of his way to see me & give me any assistance in his power & wrote to this place for me & offered me his home if I should not find a situation. He felt very bad because he said he feared the Society would perhaps refuse to send any more to be so located. . . . Mr. Emerson left [Springfield] on Friday May 7th & I stayed till Monday to take the Wagon not stage for this place. . . . I found very kind friends in one of the two Pres[byterian] families in S. & stayed with them from Thursday to Monday May 10th. I left that morning at one & rode all day in the hot sun 55 miles to this place. It is on the Stage route & twelve miles from the Ark. line, and 100 to Van Buren Ark. The mail comes here three times a week.

And now after so long a story what shall I say? I wish you could see for I can not picture the place to you as it is. The Courthouse is a two-story frame house with a chimney at one end outside. . . . The Hotel is made of three log houses—one has two glass windows, the other one, & the kitchen none. . . . We have three stores here—one of which is a log building without any windows—one grocery—three Blacksmiths—two Doctors & two Lawyers. As to preaching we have none of any sort. There [are] two Cumberland Presbyterian preachers living in town but one has lost the confidence of the people by his mercantile & other speculations & the other has other appointments. He is a fine man & came last Sabbath to help me organize a Sabbath School. . . .¹⁷

16. Thomas Hart Benton (1782-1858), senator from Missouri since its entrance as a state in 1821, opposed the Compromise of 1850 because he believed it would give southern secessionists too many concessions. He was also opposed to Abolitionists and supported the gradual elimination of slavery. Because of his stand on the Compromise of 1850, he was defeated for reelection as a senator that same year. *DAB*, vol. 1, pp. 210-13.

17. The Cumberland Presbyterians waived traditional educational requirements for the ministry in order to meet the religious needs of the West more quickly and depended on camp meetings to produce converts. They tended to reject the traditional Presbyterian tenet of predestination. The Campbellites were also an offshoot of Presbyterianism, emphasizing the autonomy of each local church, and attempting to return the church to its more primitive roots. See Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, pp. 445, 447-49, 466, 844.

school board is intelligent but a Cambelite. The lawyers are *smart* but one is the greatest drunkard out. . . . There is a vast vast field for usefulness & I only hope & pray that I may make myself acceptable to them & so be useful to them. There is great need of female culture here. I have young ladies 22, 19, 18 & so on that can hardly read & some whose parents cannot read. . . .

I shall probably have my trials here for I expect that wherever I may go I shall certainly be very lonely—but still I think could I have chosen, I could not have selected a place more in need of one of your teachers & I only wish there was one here better qualified for the work. I have not yet visited much as I have written about twelve letters—none of the length of this one & much shorter. They go altogether on horseback here as there is not a buggy in town. I have not received a letter since I came to Mo. & I suppose it will [be] August before I get one. My dear Miss S. I should like to hear from you & know what you think of my acts. I endeavored to do as well as I could. As to the books I have sold about three dolls worth. There is no paper currency in this state and coppers but as soon as I can get some paper I will send you the five dolls.

Affectionately Yours

M. M. Rogers

Cassville, Sept. 18th -50

My dear Miss Swift

Precious, very precious is the sympathy of christian friends though they be afar off. Your letter of remembrance & sympathy was to my perplexed feelings what oil is to the troubled waters. I thanked God for it & took courage: but I will explain. I told you I think the condition of the Schoolhouse here & that I could not stay unless they built an other & in the Spring they talked as if they would.

A few weeks after I came here I received two letters from Col. Love offering me his school in the fall & all that I could make from it. Well I thought I would be in no hurry to answer him; this was a good location better than his for a permanent School & it was a dark region & if I could be useful here I would use these letters to stimulate the people to exertion for a permanent School. If I could not make a permanency here then I would go there as the next best thing I could do. When I showed the letters here some said they would give \$50, others \$25 towards the erection of a new house & I must not leave &c. But from their general liberality I did not put much faith in all their says and thought I would wait & see what they would do. . . .

The school averaged 24 all the quarter; only six boys the oldest 13 had

never seen a school. [He] did not know a letter when he commenced. I had some tall girls with corresponding (southern) tempers but it has been the pleasantest & most easily governed school that I ever had. The only punishment inflicted during the three months was slightly pinching a little fellows ear for laughing. They were never tardy always respectful, & always obeyed cheerfully. They were happy in school & loved to come & I attribute my success to the reading of the scriptures & prayers at the opening of the school mornings. . . .

I have also gained the respect & confidence of the people generally & the warm esteem of the religious part of the Community. The married ladies all come to hear my instructions to their children on the Sabbath & I would not mind if they would not bring their nursing babies. They are very dear little things in the nursery—but in the S[abbath] S[chool] O how annoying to old maids! Mr. [Charles] Beecher did not tell us what to do in such a case. I would like to ask him.¹⁸

About three weeks before the close of the school I told the people that they must tell me decidedly what they would do for I must let Col. Love know. So three persons—one a Cumberland Presbyterian "Parson" another an elder & the third a Campbellite went round to ask assistance, about a house, & could raise *nothing*—as I anticipated but they came to me & said if I would stay—they would pledge themselves to make the house comfortable for me this winter & they thought by next spring there could be a new one built. I asked if there were objections to me. They said none to me nor to my teaching. It was only the fear of expense but they could not give me up. This place would never be any thing till there was a good permanent school besides they wanted me in the S.S. & it is a fact that there is not a female in this place competent to teach in the S.S. & but two men & they wanted my influence in the community. The Parson said since God had sent me to them they ought to keep me & they would do what they could to make my stay comfortable. . . .

That Saturday the Whigs who are weak in this country assembled from all parts & had an illumination or feu de joie—and when they began to light up the courthouse, the Dr.'s wife [Mrs. Means] came along and says Miss Rogers let's illuminate the house for sport. I said yes, & I put three lights in my window & the other lady boarder put three in hers & Mrs. M[Means] lighted up her part of the house.¹⁹ These ladies husbands are Whigs & their

18. The Reverend Charles Beecher, Catharine Beecher's youngest brother, addressed Martha Rogers's class at Hartford.

19. The household Martha Rogers lived in consisted of A. H. Burton, whose occupation was listed as "speculator," his wife, and four children; James Means, a physician, and his wife, who was Burton's daughter; and a single male lawyer and a single male merchant. U.S. Manuscript Census, 1850, Barry County, MO, p. 230.

parents are Bentonites but they side with their husbands so that we were all Whigs here. Just then Mrs. M's father "Parson" Burton & his wife came in—who are Benton—& went to blowing out the lights. I saw them coming so locked my door & put the key in my pocket so when they got to me they tried to raise the window. I held it & kept my lights burning. This was all observed from the courthouse & applauded but I did not know it. The Parson said laughing "You can never leave Cassville after this, the Whigs will never let you go. A Whigwoman is such a rare thing here that they will keep you as a curiosity" &c. & so he joked me.

We then went & stood under the windows to hear the speeches. Then the resolutions & proceedings of the meeting, & you may fancy my consternation when I heard it resolved "to fire three salutes for that lady who illuminated her window." They did, shouting at each fire "for Miss Rogers for illuminating her window." It raised a great excitement among them & one man said he would come and throw mud in the cracks of the school ten days before he would let me go, & he would sign one scholar if he sent none. An other said that was worth a "thousand dollars." And Monday morning they got out an article and all the Whigs signed or promised to send children or [had] no children. It was not confined to the Whigs of course & the prospect before Wednesday was fair for as large a school as the summer session.²⁰

But I thought I would wait till after Examination before I made any new decisions. I made no extra preparation for examination. Tuesday & Wednesday morning was spent in reviewing & the parents & others were asked to come in the afternoon. There was a very good attendance (babies included). The girls were very much dressed—some of them in comical taste to be sure but that we will remedy in time. They all appeared unembarrassed & easy. They sang three songs "Try try again" "Sparkling & bright" "Up the Hills on a bright sunny morn" for the close. This is something new here & takes well. At the close I told them we had no writing to exhibit as we had no desks to write on. I had tried to do what I could with slates. I then said I would be glad to have every one present offer an opinion & make any suggestions on any thing. My friend the "Parson" then rose & complimented both teacher & pupils & spoke of the inconvenience of the house and called upon all present to unite in making the House comfortable & keeping me among them &c. Then brought our exercises to a close. It was five O'Clock & I was so exhausted that I feared I could not get through. I closed the 4th of Sept. to commence again the 1st of Oct for five months. . . .

My dear Miss Swift I am ashamed to trespass upon your time with such long letters, & yet I do not know how I could make you understand my

20. The Whigs did defeat Benton in 1850. However, the Whig party Martha Rogers knew in New York did not support slavery. In Missouri in 1850, the Whigs were strong only because they united against Benton, a Democrat, and his opposition to the Compromise of 1850.

position otherwise. . . . As to the moral conditions of the people—there has been preaching twice in this place since I came here. . . . There is a grocery just across the square & there every day the sound of revelry, debauch, & cursing is heard—& I have more than one scholar whose father is a sot. Rev. Mr. Cook of Auburn sends me the "Youth's Temperance Advocate" which I distribute very gladly.

A shocking circumstance took place here the 30th of Aug. Some four weeks before that, a Lawyer named Smythe, who got drunk every day & always carried knives & pistols fell out with a neighbor of his & brother drunkard both being drunk at the time. S. fired a pistol at the other [B.] but the cap burst. He [Smythe] then struck at him with it. The other's wife got between them & wrenched it from him. He [Smythe] then got his knife and wounded the other [B.] in five or six places. B. got on his horse & rode up here a mile & a half to have his wounds sewed when he swore that he would kill S.

He [B.] had kept sober since that till the 30th Aug. when he had been drinking some; but was not intoxicated. That morning S. was seen riding into town with a bowie knife unsheathed in his hand. About 3 in the afternoon B. was sitting in front of one of the stores, when S. rode up very drunk & offered his hand to the merchant first. He refused & went inside. S. then offered his left hand to B. who put his hand in his [own] hand & said "no, you tried to kill me & I'll not shake hands with you."

On this S. brought over his right hand & aimed a pistol just between his eyes. Again the cap burst & B. escaped but on the instant he [B.] drew a knife twelve inches long & three wide & thrust it through him [Smythe]. The first thrust cut through both lungs & would have been enough but he [B.] dug at him till he had inflicted eleven wounds each of which would have been mortal. It was in the square where all saw it. S. never uttered a word after he was hit but the last words heard from him were curses upon B. He slid from his horse & lay there. He groaned heavily two or three times but no one went near him till a brother lawyer came up—urged them to come & help take him some where for he was a human being. They then took him to the Doctor's office. The tailor made his shroud, all the women refusing to do it & but two men were willing to touch him any way. B. was tried that night & acquitted on the plea of self defence, it being the third time that S. had tried to shoot him.

I was horrified & could not sleep that night at all and I wondered that people did not exterminate that grocery at once. The next day his butchered, bloated body was taken to its last resting place, his wife & three children riding in the same wagon. This is a picture of Cassville. S. was a man of superior talents & education & the only thoroughly educated man in the place. He had formerly been a class leader & Methodist exhorter. He was also a "Son of Temperance" some two years ago. B. is also a man of good

everything. I am allowed two chairs—those straight backed kitchen chairs—(they have no others in this place) which feel hard enough when I come home tired & exhausted as I used in the hot weather, hardly able to hold my head up & then I would have given any thing for an arm chair to hold me up, for I was often as drooping as the candles.

It is the Season of Camp meetings now. There was one two weeks since some 30 miles from this where two of my pupils went & one a young lady of 18 who has been a very rude, dancing, trifling girl, returned home rejoicing in a new found Saviour. I have not seen her since but they say she is a bright christian & that her very countenance is changed. Last week there was one some 8 miles from here where four more of my pupils came out bright—the daughter of the Parson with whom I board, two daughters of the elder I before mentioned, & the fact that a bright whole souled girl is cousin of the first young lady mentioned, has a deist father, careless mother, & a wicked sister who was so enraged at her when she returned that she cursed her & abused her cruelly. She is but 13 & will require much grace & encouragement to be able to endure the persecutions of such a home. I was not well enough to attend those meetings & I can not tell you how I felt when I heard that my pupils were the only converts at those meetings. . . .

Miss Sawyer & I have opened a correspondence which I hope will prove as profitable to me as it is pleasant. Her school numbers between 60 & 70 this session & Mr. Smith has charge of the male department. He is a dear good man I often wish I had such an ally here. With the exception of Misses Taylor & June, I have not heard from one of our stars. I have received a letter from Miss T. & Miss June sent me word by one of the gentlemen who went to Texas from here that she had sent me a letter the week before they got there but I have not received it. The account you gave of those teachers heard from was so characteristic of each that I could not help smiling when reading it. We all anticipated difficulties for Sister Lord for she was always full of them even in Hartford. Miss Arnold's combativeness was rather too large not to excite opposition. Miss Warner would doubtless be as easy with her pupils as she was with her hair. And Miss Carpenter has such a truly Christianly amiable disposition that she will be pleasantly situated any where. . . .²³

My compensation for the past quarter was seventy dolls. Paid for board & washing for eleven weeks—eighteen dolls fifty cts. I have on the list 32 different scholars—but the average attendance was twenty four & they pay

23. Susan A. Lord, who was living in Boston when she applied to the board, first taught in Wisconsin. In the spring of 1852, she was one of three teachers who went to San Francisco, where she taught at the Benicia Young Ladies Seminary before marrying a judge. Mary S. Arnold from Monmouth, Maine, was teaching in St. Charles, Illinois. Fanny A. Warner, who came from Sunderland, Massachusetts, taught in Aztalan, Wisconsin, until her marriage in 1851 to Alonzo M. Morrison, a lumber dealer in various parts of Wisconsin. S. Augusta Carpenter, who was only nineteen when she went West, returned to her native Greenfield, Massachusetts, sometime before 1854, when she married James Averill.

education & sense & would be a fine man but for this demon rum. He has not drunk since & says he will not. May God help him keep his resolution.

I have read Mary Carrow's School to my scholars with very good effect & also some of the stories [in] the book which Mrs. Sigourney gave me.²¹ They all love to have me read to them & I [am] trying to excite curiosity & a desire to read themselves but the parents are no readers, have no books nor papers—and there is not a woman in this town who is a fluent easy reader & there are more than one who cannot read at all. I have thought that I would like to have a few books for a sort of circulating Library to excite a desire & taste for reading—such as "Miss Ellis's works," "Charlotte Elisabeth Tales for the People" & "Temperance Tales."²² I think such would be read & would create a taste for reading. I intend to write to Mr. Myers for a S.S. Library. I would have done so before only that I was so unsettled all summer not knowing if I should stay. What I next want is one of Winchester's Charts; and Canvas & posters for working worsted with. I could sell all such things if I had them, for the parents are very desirous that their daughters should learn needlework. I could not obtain the materials & therefore could not teach it. I would like very much to have this coming session a class in Physiology & one in United States History, but cannot obtain the books. A box directed to me to the care of J. & W. McDowell St. Louis would be forwarded to me as they have a brother here selling goods & he sends wagons there every two or three months, but the freight is four cents a pound from there here so that it would cost more from St. L. here than all the rest of the road.

You say "mention any little personal comfort you may need." If I had a pound of Spermatici candles & a rocking chair I should feel quite comfortable—as it is I think I shall live but they have nothing but the most inferior kind of tallow candles, which are sometimes green, & sometimes black, & so debilitated by the heat that they cannot stand alone when put in candlesticks—so that like the Coffee they have to be laid by to rest. I have dispensed with lights all summer but can not any longer. I have been accommodated all summer with a table a foot square—so since vacation I have had one of larger dimensions—made a rough pine table without paint or anything for which I had to pay \$2.50. I got the cheapest thing I could find for a cover for which I gave \$1.50—making just \$4 so that is the way with

21. Lydia Sigourney, a well-known Hartford author, wrote poems and stories with strong moral themes. She was president of the Female Beneficent Society and met with several classes of teachers before they went West. *NAV*, vol. 3, pp. 288-90; *Hartford Directory*, 1850, p. 198

22. A collection of these books is in the Connecticut Historical Society. Sarah (Stickney) Ellis wrote such works as *First Impressions*; or, *Hints to Those Who Would Make Home Happy* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1846). The Charlotte Elisabeth Tales were written by Charlotte Elisabeth Tonna and published by the American Tract Society. Like the Temperance Tales, published in Boston by Ford & Durrell, they were little paperback tracts teaching morals in story form.

only for the actual attendance of each pupil. Was not able to teach writing the last quarter as there were no desks & I deducted something in my charges lest they should say I had not taught all I agreed to but I shall do so no more.

An other class will have been assembled in [Hartford] & scattered before this reaches you. The Oregon class will also be on the boisterous Ocean—busy & anxious hearts those would wish & hope that none would meet with such rebuffs as I did but I dare not for though it was trying to the flesh, yet if God could & would be best glorified in it it was all *right*, & I thank him that it is as well with me as it is. I shall look with some solitude to know if you censure the course which I took with regard to my breach of promise to Col. Love. Be not too severe for my inclination was to go, feeling that I would have more personal comfort & better society.

Throwing myself upon your mercy for sending such a long & illly written letter I will close with my many thanks for your dear letter, & may God spare you long to be a comfort to your friends & us, poor isolated ones so far away from home & friends is the prayer of M. M. Rogers.

Teaching in Wright and Camden Counties, Missouri:

April, 1851, to August, 1852

A few months after the preceding letter, Martha Rogers did leave Cassville to teach in Colonel Love's select school east of Springfield, Missouri, near Waldo in Wright County.²⁴ Although thirty-eight pupils registered, the attendance averaged twenty-four. "The pupils made very good progress," she wrote, "considering the irregular attendance & astonished & delighted their parents & friends at examination." At the end of her third session nearly a year later, she planned to give her school "a little fête in the shape of a 'Christmas tree' on Christmas day." She described the supper put on by Mrs. Love on the day of the recent examination. "A table was spread under a rough bower which we have erected in the Schoolyard & bread & butter, cold fowls, & cakes in any quantities were dealt out bountifully to the Scholars first & then to all who would partake," she wrote. "It was a *great* Examination & a great feast out here & was much talked of, & by many thought that it ought to be published in the 'Springfield Advertiser.'"

Rogers was particularly encouraged by the arrival of a Presbyterian minister who preached in her schoolroom every other week. She encouraged the Loves to keep the Sabbath. "Mrs. Love says that she never had so few *Sunday visitors* since she came to the State as she has had since I came here &

24. Anzina Perkins was in the fall class Martha Rogers mentioned, but the group for Oregon did not leave until the spring.

25. The letters omitted are from Hazelwood, Missouri, 4 April 1851; Waldo P. O. Wright County, Missouri, 1 December 1851, 10 March 1852; Erie, Camden County, 26 August 1852.

playfully says that I keep them away," she wrote Nancy Swift. "They have also stopped cooking on the Sabbath & have a cold dinner. There were many remarks made about it at first—that I dictated the family & made them do it &c. But the Col. & his wife only laughed at it & said I might take all the credit of it, they had not the least objection."

Her position in "Love Ridge School" continued for only a year and a half. The death of Colonel Love, a month after the Christmas fête, caused the school to close at the end of the spring term. In July 1852, she began a new position in Erie, Camden County, north of Springfield. She had decided to start teaching immediately because the number of pupils in her last session had been small after Mrs. Love decided not to take in boarders. "I felt I must teach all the time to make up losses," she said, "but it is a losing concern all the time as to the money part." When she wrote Nancy Swift to tell her of the new position, she was suffering from an attack of "Billious fever," probably malaria, and taking quinine. Despite her sickness, she was again encouraged. "I have improved myself in the *art* of *Society* very much—with the exception of my kind friends in Springfield they are the most refined people I have met in the S. W."

Martha Rogers continued her correspondence with her sister teachers. She mentioned the marriage of Sarah Ballard and noted that Ann Sawyer, who was home for a visit, planned to return West. "There is much to do out here," she wrote, "& such teachers as she is are much needed. Miss Sawyer has done much for Education in South West Missouri. She broke down strong prejudices & established a school which stands high in point of thoroughness & discipline."²⁶ Her only request from Nancy Swift was "some sort of *short hand* or *steam* process whereby could make scholars learn every thing in *three months* if they did not attend half the time at *that*."

Martha Rogers's health improved after a trip back East in the spring of 1853. Her final two letters follow; the first describes her return to Missouri.

Erie, Camden Co. Mo. June 18th -53

Dear Miss Swift,

Will you accept many thanks for your very kind letter which reached me the day I left home. I did not expect you to write while you were in Hartford, for I do not forget the piles of letters which came to you almost daily while *we* were there, & I can therefore appreciate your kindness—also in remembering me in the distribution of the books which you sent us.

26. Ann Sawyer did return to the West in 1853. She went to Michigan, where she helped start the first state school for dependent children. She married John Chandler in Coldwater, Michigan, in 1859, and had one son, the Reverend E. S. Chandler of Amboy, Illinois. She died at his home in 1899. Ann Sawyer Chandler, Beatrice, Nebraska, to Mrs. Blanchard, 23 July 1886; Ann Sawyer Chandler, obituary, Mount Holyoke College Alumnae Records.

You can well imagine how happy Miss Wilkinson & I were to meet at Albany, so unexpectedly too & we were inseparable after we met at the Delavan house, & remained there till Monday—so did not see any of the Class but Miss Rix who came to Mo. She called Sat. evening with Gov. Slade. How glad I was to meet that good man again, so like a father. Monday morning after we got en route for Buffalo, Gov. brought Miss Adams & introduced her; then she gave me the parcel which you sent me. Miss Wilkinson was sitting by me & looked very hard at the books and then said in her quick hoping way—you remember it I suppose, "Well now Miss Swift is *partial* to send you so many books & not send me any." I replied laughing—if Miss Swift had not sent them to me, I would divide with you, but I can not. It was not long however before Gov. brought up an other lady & introduced her to Miss W. She then handed her a parcel from you also. When she opened it & I saw the *tracts* with the books, I laughed at her & said "O yes Miss Swift is *partial* but to *whom*? I will write & tell her"—which I have as you see.²⁷

My journey this time was pleasanter than the first. We had our good *father* with us to Cincinnati & Miss W. to the mouth of the Tenn. And when we got to St. Louis I found a party from this place, my pupils some of them & concluded to wait for them. So I bade goodbye to our young ladies & spent a week in St. Louis & came up on the same boat that they did.

The Capt. said it all went up to Boonville in company with the Indian agent who resides at Neosho, so that Miss Adams had an escort all the way & the others took Stages.²⁸ I reached here the 21st of May. People seemed very glad to see me. The following week I got myself & schoolroom ready & *visited* some. This last you know is very important out here. I commenced school the 30th for three months. I have 30. Just now I am sailing in smooth waters—school is pleasant—my rest last winter & journey this spring home improved my health very much & I have much better spirits than when I left.

We reorganized our S. School last Sabbath. I was anxious to do so; but thought it best to wait till solicited & they have all seemed very urgent. It consists mostly of young people. All my teachers (~~but~~) are young men & none of them pious. And as I can find no gentleman to superintend, the Office rests with me. The duty of praying in our school has been very plain to me all the time, but the question whether a woman should pray in such a

27. There were two Mary Adamses in the thirteenth class leaving Albany in the spring of 1853. Martha Rogers meant Mary E. Adams, who went to Neosho, Missouri, to teach. The only information on Miss Rix is in Martha Rogers's letter and Mary E. Adams's letter talking about how two sisters named Rix parted, one to go with her to Neosho. Caroline Wilkinson also enjoyed meeting Martha Rogers, and told Nancy Swift that they decided that "Missouri and Tennessee are almost twin sisters."

28. Mary E. Adams married an Indian trader, Alexander Warfield, within a year. It is probable that he is the man described here as escorting her to Neosho. Mary E. Adams was only twenty and from Bangor, Maine. She had studied at Mount Holyoke. She died in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1905.

public place was not so easily answered in my own mind & I have compromised the matter by reading a form of prayer suitable for the S. School. Do you not think it the most prudent & feminine course for me to take in a place so public where men of all ages & creeds come merely to be amused & pass away the time? This is my greatest cross at present but if God will make this school a blessing to these young people & to the community my trials will be very insignificant indeed.

Please excuse my long letters for you are well aware by this time that I do not know how to be brief.

With much love I remain
Respectfully Yours

M. M. Rogers

Erie Aug. 24th 1853

Dear Miss Swift

Your last kind letter has been received some time, but I thought I would wait till the close of school. Our examination was held on Thursday & Friday. I had large classes in Botany, Philosophy, Physiology &c. The Scholars did very well but the people did not attend till the last afternoon when they knew the Compositions & speaking were to come off. I regretted that but am glad they let me have my own way about everything—& if satisfied—at all events they let me have my own way about everything—& if there were places for boarders I would have a large school next session I think.

I feel a little anxious to realize something in the money line more—as it proved a losing concern all the time before & my friends were very unwilling that I should return as they thought I could make more at home with less labor and more "creature comforts." All which was true—but I am willing to labor here for small salaries even only that I think I should follow the counsels of those who have the right to advise & direct. I would have been glad to correspond with all the young ladies who came out with me & asked them to do so but I have not heard from any of them directly or indirectly. I am sorry for I would like much to hear from them.

I would like much to learn the difficulty with Miss Wait farther than the fact of her having married Mr. Smith's brother which of itself I can not consider so great an offense & I can not think that Mr. S. did right to come here & talk as he did, all being strangers. Still he may be able to justify himself in doing so.²⁹

29. Martha Rogers is referring to R. D. Smith, who operated the academy in Pleasant Retreat where Ann Sawyer first taught. Fidelity Wait, from Hatfield, Massachusetts, joined Ann Sawyer there and apparently married R. D. Smith's brother. Ann E. Sawyer, Andover, New Hampshire, to Nancy Swift, 18 April 1853, letters folder, NPEB Papers.

The Springfield people are not at all suited in Schools yet—although most every family has a school & some of my friends talk of sending their children here if they can get them boarded—but I think they will send for a teacher from the present class. The mail which brought your letter brought one from Miss Wilkinson. She told me all she had passed through but said she was now very happy—& had also engaged in a S. School—the responsibility of which devolves mostly on herself, & there I can sympathize for I know all about that. I send this to Hartford. Please present my respects to the Class & tell them not to be afraid or discouraged at trials for they *must come* but there is a reward beyond.

Please give my love to Gov. Slade and say that my school has averaged 35 all this Session & my health has been better far than for a year before I went home—

Very affectely Yours

M. M. Rogers

10

From Pioneer Teacher to Pioneer Settler: The Mississippi Valley

Mary A. Hitchcock and Sarah Ballard Thurston

"And besides it seems to be just the place for me," wrote Mary Hitchcock soon after she started to teach in the new settlement of Princeton, Cass County, in west central Illinois.¹ She was not happy with her first western assignment in a select girls' school in Beardstown, a rapidly growing center on the Illinois River. But like many of the pioneer teachers who became pioneer settlers, Mary Hitchcock had already decided to stay in the West. It was a matter of finding the right place. Although at twenty-two she was younger than most of the teachers who chose to make new homes in the West, her ties to a particular place in the East were not strong. Before she was ten, her family moved from Fort Covington, New York, on the Canadian border, to Bangor, Maine, and back to Ticonderoga at the tip of Lake George. She returned to the area north of the Adirondacks to attend the academy at Malone. During her first spring in Illinois, she looked forward to a visit from her father and two brothers-in-law, who were thinking about following her initiative in moving West.

Mary Hitchcock's spirit of adventure was evident in the first reason she gave for wanting to teach in the West—"to see more of the country"; Sarah Ballard's chief goal was the increased opportunity to support herself. By the time she joined the class at Hartford in the spring of 1850, Ballard was thirty-two. She was a resident of Worcester, Massachusetts, but had recently taught for seven seasons in Vermont. Of the West she said she hoped to find "a wider field for usefulness there, than here." She also looked forward to a life dedicated "to the Service of God."² When she encountered problems in

1. Although Princeton, about ten miles east of Beardstown, was a thriving small town at mid-century, the railroad passed it by and the town was vacated in 1875. William H. Perrin, *History of Cass County, Illinois* (Chicago: 1882), pp. 158-59; reference supplied by Marjorie Taylor, Cass County Historical Society.

2. Mary A. Hitchcock, 2 September 1852, biography folder; Sarah A. Ballard, Worcester, Massachusetts, 7 February 1850, application folder, NPEB Papers.