

# The Mercy Akin Letter Collection

## 42 Letters

### 1829 - 1846

**Deciphered by: Robert Larry Akin**

**And presented: January 2004**

Ethen Akin (my Great Great Great Grandfather) was born in White Creek, NY in 1779. In 1800, he married Mercy Brownell Slocum. Soon after, they moved with Ethen's father, Edward Akin, and all of his family to Johnstown, NY where Ethen and Mercy settled on a farm northeast of Johnstown. Ethen was very entrepreneurial and soon had a tanning business, a grist mill, an Inn, and a saw mill in operation. In addition, he was active as a "note collector". While living near Johnstown, they had twelve children, eight of whom lived to adulthood:

Edward Akin	1801 - 1822	Harriet Akin	1814 - 1826
Elizabeth Akin	1803 -	Jane Eliza Akin	1816 -
Armida Akin	1805 - 1832	+George Henry	1812 -
+Hiram D. Eldridge	1801 - 1879	Mary Loisa Akin	1818 - 1898
Hannah Akin	1807 -	+John L. Stuart	1807 - 1870 (see Adelia Akin)
+George E. Freeman	1805 -	Ethan Akin II	1820 - 1898
Adelia A. Akin	1810 - 1837	+Susan B. St. John	1822 - 1908
+John L. Stuart	1807 - 1870	Edwin William Akin	1822 - 1825
Caroline Akin	1812 - 1895	Dewitt C. Akin	1825 - 1907 (Born Port Byron)
+Elmore Preston Ross	1812 - 1879	+Helena St. John	1825 - 1895

During the period between 1813 and 1823, Ethen became interested in the community of Port Byron in Cayuga County, NY. He probably was involved with the construction of a dam and grist mill on the Owasco River there. In 1823, he purchased this mill and moved his family to Port Byron. Around this time, the Erie Canal that passed through Port Byron was opened, and Ethan's mill became very prosperous. Soon Ethen had expanded to include a distillery, a sawmill, a tannery as well as a large farm, and he continued his "note collection" business.

He died in Port Byron at the age of 46 in 1825 leaving Mercy with a large family the youngest of whom was but a few months old. Fortunately, Mercy was to prove to be an extremely able person and the sale of the businesses that Ethen had created brought her \$10,000 which was a fortune during that time.

Mercy stayed in Port Byron until 1834 when she moved back to Johnstown where many of the Akin and associated families still lived. She apparently was an able money manager, and there is evidence that she participated in various investments mostly with other members of the family. Eventually, she moved in with one of her sons, Ethan Akin, II (my Great, Great, Grandfather) who was a lawyer. Mercy died in 1866, some 40+ years after her husband had died.

Between 1829 and 1846, a series of letters were written mostly to Mercy, and these letters have survived. They were part of a much larger collection of papers that I call The Richard Akin Collection since my Uncle Dick has these papers in his possession. The story of their survival is worth the telling.

The Akin Papers consist of a large collection of original hand-written documents dating from 1790 to the 1920's. My theory is that the oldest of these papers were first collected and saved by Mercy Slocum Akin, the wife of Ethen Akin, Sr. from his files. I suspect that she kept these papers because Ethen died quite young and Mercy was required to carry on by herself for many years. She would have kept these papers as a prudent businesswoman. Mercy's son, Ethan Akin, II, became a lawyer and I suspect that he got these papers when Mercy came to live with him, and he kept them as a careful lawyer would. Susan St. John Akin, the wife of Ethan Akin, II, survived her husband, and spent the last years of her life living with her son, Louis Akin, in Corning, Adams Co., Iowa. I believe that Susan Akin brought these papers with her to Corning. Rev. Louis L. Akin, my grandfather, was a favorite nephew of the Louis Akin of Corning, and I believe that my grandfather obtained these papers from Susan St. John Akin or his Uncle Louis of Corning somewhere along the line.

Grandfather Louis treasured these old papers, and his analysis of them resulted in at least one newspaper article published in the Carroll Herald a copy of which I have in my library, and, more importantly to me, they probably were in large measure the inspiration to Grandfather to create a manuscript called the Akin Saga. When Grandfather moved into a nursing home in 1975, these old papers were given to my father, Robert L. Akin, who placed them in a box, and stored them in the basement of the so-called "Green House" on the Akin Farm in Carroll. This "Green House" was built as a hired-man's house one-half mile north of the Akin farmhouse with green colored shingles as siding on the outside walls of the little house. My Mother and Father lived there briefly when they were first married in 1937, and my sister was born while they lived there. When the papers were stored there, no one was living in the "Green House".

One day in the early 1980's, my wife and our two children who had heard about mysterious objects stored down in this little "Green House" talked my Mother into taking them down there to explore. When they got there, they could see that the padlock on the door had been broken and the place had been looted. The "Green House" had been ransacked and the box of old treasures was gone.

Fast forward thirteen years later to 1993 when my Uncle Richard Akin who lives in Texas got a phone call from a woman named Judy Sherbert from near Colorado Springs, Colorado. She said that in the mid-1980's she bought a box of "unknowns" at an antique store in Palmer City, Colorado near Colorado Springs. In it were a bunch of old documents. She finally got around to looking at them and by looking at the names and places on some of the letters, she was able to track down my Uncle. They traded addresses and she graciously mailed the box to him. None of the artifacts remained - only the documents, but these documents bring to life our ancestors who were truly pioneers when the frontier was in western NY just after the birth of our nation. We in the Akin family are forever in the debt of this gracious and selfless woman, Judy Sherbert.

My Uncle who at that time was not particularly interested in family history put all of the documents in an old suitcase and threw it up in his attic where it stayed until he invited me down to Texas to investigate them. Since then, I have scanned these old documents and stored their images on CD's where they are safely archived. In addition, I repaired the documents to the best of my ability with acid-free tape. They are now in notebooks preserved from sunlight in acid-free protectors and are on a bookshelf in my Uncle's family room. They are in surprisingly good condition, and they should be available for many future generations.

Some of these documents were very difficult to decipher, but I have done my best. None the less, errors probably remain for which I apologize. I hope you enjoy them.

## Table of Contents

Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 29 September 1829.....	4
Letter from Ira Akin to Mercy Akin dated 4 April 1832 .....	5
Letter from Hannah Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 13 March 1834.....	6
Letter from H. Eldridge to Mercy Akin dated 7 May 1834.....	8
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 17 May 1834.....	9
Letter from H. Eldridge to Mercy Akin dated 29 May 1834.....	11
Letter from Robinson to Mercy Akin dated 17 July 1834 .....	13
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 19 August 1834.....	14
Letter from H. Eldridge to Mercy Akin dated 19 April 1835 .....	15
Letter from H. Eldridge to Mercy Akin dated 5 May 1835.....	16
Letter from John Stuart to Mercy Akin dated 30 June 1835 .....	18
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 27 July 1835 .....	19
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 22 Aug 1835.....	20
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 21 September 1835.....	21
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 23 November 1835 .....	22
Letter from John Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 26 December 1835 .....	23
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 25 April 1836.....	24
Letter from Caroline Ross to Mercy Akin dated 12 June 1836.....	25
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 13 July 1836.....	27
Letter from John Stuart to Ethan Akin dated 15 August 1836 .....	28
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 15 January 1837.....	29
Letter from John Stuart to Ethan Akin dated 7 March 1837.....	30
Letter from Caroline Ross to Mary Akin dated 4 June 1837 .....	31
Letter from John Stuart to Mary Akin dated 4 September 1837 .....	33
Letter from Royal Slocum to Mercy Akin dated 2 August 1838 .....	34
Letter from John Stuart to Ethan Akin dated 24 August 1838 .....	35
Letter from Caroline Ross to Mercy Akin dated 14 October 1838.....	37
Letter from George Henry to Mercy Akin dated 31 October 1838.....	38
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 27 June 1839 .....	39
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 25 September 1839.....	40
Letter from Mary Akin to Mercy Akin dated 27 October 1839 .....	41
Letter from Caroline Ross to Mercy Akin dated 7 December 1839 .....	43
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 28 January 1840.....	45
Letter from John Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 14 December 1844 .....	46
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 10 January 1845.....	47
Letter from Mary Stuart to Mercy Akin dated 21 January 1845.....	48
Forbes & Sheldon Letter to Ethan Akin dated 16 Aug 1845.....	50
Letter from Caroline Ross to Mercy Akin dated 14 November 1845 .....	51
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 17 December 1845.....	53
Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 4 Feb 1846.....	54
Letter from T. Slocum to Mercy Akin dated 12 May 1846.....	55

**Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 29 September 1829**

Seneca Falls 29 September 1829

Dear Mother,

I beg leave to inform you that I have returned from New York. I arrived here last Sunday evening by the stage, and although I was not gone as long as expected, I bought quite as many goods as I intended. The girls tell me you are about going to Johnstown. If you can make it convenient to come here before you go, I have no doubt that you might save yourself the trouble of bringing your Fall stock of goods from the East. I have a very splendid assortment of blue, black and mixt (sic) clothes, also a superb piece of blue and mixt (sic) pilese.

Please tell Adelia I very much regret to hear of her misfortune which so much abridged her stay at S. F. [Seneca Falls]. I found the girls quite well.

Give my compliments to Doct. Family and believe me to be –

Yours very respectfully,

G. E. Freeman

Mrs. Mercy Akin  
Port Byron

## Letter from Ira Akin to Mercy Akin dated 4 April 1832

Tymachte (Tymachtee) April 4, 1832?

Dear Sister

I hav [have] inglect [neglected?] riteing [writing] as soon as I aut [ought?] too. Been in good health. Hoping these few lines may find you and your family in Byron same. ? Marcy [Mercy,] I hav [have] had a letter from E. Manchester stating that note I gave you that Ebenezear Akin paid you for that horse of mine Isaac has inventoryed [inventoried] against me and I want you to goo [go] out to Scipio and tel [tell] them Ebenezear was to pay that note for the horse he had of me. Mr. Eldridge drew the orders I gave Ebenezear for the horse and ask Eldridge if he new [knew] enethig [anything] about a note that Ebenezear gave me against Johnson's 130 and one 3 dollars and a note against Parkes of 164 Dollars which Note he turned out tords [towards] the payment of my farm and when I came away gave him them to collect Parkes note. [He] he told me when he came to the Ohio he had collect [collected] Parkes Note and Manchester state [states] in his leter [letter] that hundred and Seventy Six Dollars that you paid Eben was not my money. I want you to go out and see what they say about the money and right [write] what they say about it and I want you to rite [write] a letter stating how your bisness [business] is settled [settled] and I wat [want] you to rite [write] to me about every thing yo [you] can think abot [about]. I want you shod [should] cum [come] out in to the Ohio and see it. Remember my love to all your children that I shod [should] be as glad to see them all. Tel [Tell] Mr. Eldredge I shud [should] be very glad to have cum [come] in to this Country and it. So ? I remain your friends all. Don't fight to right as soon as you can. Ira Akins

## Letter from Hannah Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 13 March 1834

Date from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> inclusive  
New York 13 March 1834

Dear Mother,

I suppose you would like to hear how Judson is and how I like living in the city. I can tell you I don't like it much. There is most too much bustle for me, and another thing, I can't bear to be cooped up in the third story where I can't see anything but old carts and once in a while a sweep or two. They would be quite a sight in Johnstown, I suppose.

I have taken two rides uptown. The first, we rode eight or nine miles about town. I saw some most lovely situations. They were far beyond anything I ever saw before. I only wish I had one of these houses and furniture. They have three different kinds of curtains at one window. Next to the street on one side, red Damask silk, yellow on the other, and then on the inside – white flowered silk. It looks as thin as gauze. You cannot think how beautiful it looks. The buildings are very nice and expensive. The walks and the steps are white marble. Oh, they look so rich and beautiful. I most wish we were rich. That is a vain wish, I fear; however, I will live in hopes if I die in despair.

Last Monday morning we went up to see Mary Burdick. She and her family are well. She has two little girls. They are very pretty. Her house is furnished very well. About like Phebe Roods, I should think - perhaps not quite as nice. She set her table with very pretty white china. I think Mary rather pleasant sort of a woman. Mother, you have seen her, I suppose. Burdick is a little lively sort of a fellow and something of a dandy. He called to see us on Sunday and urged us so hard to come on Monday, we went and had a very pleasant visit and there became acquainted with a sister of his – a very pleasant woman.

Mr. Freeman has rented a house -- part of No. 94 Gold Street, from the first of May. We shall board until then at 44. The lady where we board is very pleasant, but not very neat. I should not think she took much pride in keeping her house clean. The rest of our neighbors across the way that I can see clean all through their houses every day – even the drapes on the doors. Friday morning and the same old story of cleaning. All the servants to work washing windows and cleaning floors. I often wish they would come across the street and clean my room, for it is the dirtiest place I ever saw. Old Mr. Daniels' is a palace to this house; however, I think we must make some allowance. They have seven boarders and no servant. I heard her say this morning she would try to get out this afternoon and see if she could find one. I hope she will so we can have some cleaning done, for it needs it bad enough.

I suppose you have heard from Eldridge and the children before this. If you have, let us know, for I expect to hear he is married. Caddy, when you write to him, give my love to him and the children.

Tell Adelia when you see her for me, I am very sorry we could not come and see her on our way to New York, for I am afraid it will be a long while before I do. Give my love to all our friends. Tell them they must call and see us when they come to the city.

Mother, our little Sony has got a double tooth and another most through. I have weaned him and only had to get up with him once. He weaned very easy. He eats very hearty and appears quite well for him. He has been very sick since we left Johnstown. We have been doctoring him some for worms, but don't know as it did any good. We could not get any from him. You cannot think how lonesome the poor little fellow was for the first four or five days. We had to keep him in our arms pretty much all the time and walk about the house and he would not then be still. He is

getting to be more reconciled to his room. He begins to play quite smartly with his little playthings.

Tell Jane and Mary I miss them some about keeping them picked up, for it takes half my time to wait on him. He is sleeping now, sweetly. Tell DeWitt [that] Jony Judson sends him a kiss and wants to see him very much.

It commenced snowing last night and the snow fell six or seven inches. Nothing disturbs me so much as the cry of fire after I have been to sleep, but I have to hear it most every night, for there is a fire almost every night and sometimes two. There has been two or three destructive fires, but not within half a mile of us. A storehouse three or four doors below us caught fire, but was put out before it done much damage.

Oh, the bustle. I never did see the like. I am getting so I can lay in bed as well as the xxxx. The folks it don't disturb them. Well girls, what xxxx. You think this is doing very well for me. I think it is. I think you write to praise me some, for I have only been two days writing this. I hope some of you will answer this before long. I write to all of you, so don't say she didn't write to me, or to me. I say it is to all, so be good children to your Mother.

I am, as ever, your affectionate daughter,

Hannah

Mrs. Mercy Akin

You perceive that I have but a very small corner left for me. I presume the sheet will be quite as interesting as I could have made it. I get two good rooms on the second story of a three story brick house (front room papered) with privilege in cellar, kitchen and garret for \$130 per ann. We got water in the cellar. I can have a bedroom in garret.

I could get a situation for Ethan here almost any day if he were here. You know, no one would agree to take him without seeing him. I might possibly get his board the first year, but that would be an unusual good bargain.

If one of the girls will come and stay with Hannah this summer and help her do the work, I will give her board. We expect to see you this summer. You will recollect that we are 94 Gold Street.

No one can imagine the extent of the pressure for money unless he is here amongst it. Every description of property is extremely low and if I had a little ready money, I could invest it in such a way as it would be perfectly safe and together with my own services, produce to me from \$12[00] to \$1500 a year. But, we must do the best we can. Give my compliments to all our friends and say to such as come down we expect to see them.

Yours,

Freeman

## Letter from H. Eldridge to Mercy Akin dated 7 May 1834

Port Byron Wednesday 7 May 1834

Dear Mother,

I wrote you some time since informing you that has sold out & should soon vacate your house and asking instructions respecting the disposal of it: whether I should rent it or close it & which remains unanswered at this date. I wish now you will tend to it. Mr. E. Stark who occupied my house wishes to rent yours or a part of it. Please write me what you wish to have done. Shall I rent it? If so, for what rent? All of it? Or only a part? For how long a time? For a specific time, or only to vacate at any time you mad order? I wish you would answer these questions immediately as I contemplate leaving in about 2 weeks.

Mr. Stark, I think, would pay you \$60. For the use of the kitchen part, the front north parlour and cellar together with the Barn etc, etc, and keep it in order & pay all or any damages done in the premises. Now if I may be allowed to offer any advice on the subject, I should propose to let it on such conditions & lock up the remainder part of the house which can, you know, be done by fastening the fornt & back hall doors & putting a lock on the door communicating between the north parlour & hall. The reason for not renting more of the house is that should he rent the whole, he will have it in his power to relet. The effect will be he will perhaps have a tenant under him. And he is not, I should think from the specimen I have had of his tenanship under me, the most careful man I could think of in the care of a house. And one thing more I should advise you to do immediately: it is to get your house insured for its value. The reason for this is that Mr. Tubs in his speculative wisdom has seen fit to erect a large two store waggon making shop in addition to his blacksmith shop and immediately in contact with the north side of it and which, should I hire h??, I should expect to be a bonfire before the end of a year. And when it does burn must inevitably burn yours should the wind be westerly. I cannot ??? what in the name of sense (?) Tubs has done this for. He has not the least shadow of Title to the land wher(e) it stands. He has no title except for 28 by 36 feet & he has already covered nearly 100 feet again. You have no remedy known (?) for your security except by an insurance. You may get it insured for \$800 for about \$10 per annum.

There is nothing worth relating in this quarter. It remains very healthy. The weather is sour & unsettled: today it has rained incessantly.

I had a letter 2 days since from Stuart & Jane. They were all well & in spirits. Del<sup>r</sup> [Adelia?] was washing. I hope she has got done by this time. I have received 2 letters from Calasangus (?) inviting me to settle there. Romeyn & Mercy have been attending school & Romeyn is well but Mercy has played at school so hard that she has made herself sick.

I have only to add that if you have not written before you should receive this that you do so immediately on the receipt. My love to sister Caroline & Mary, Brothers Ethan & Dewitt & complements to all who may enquire after.

Dear Mother,  
Your affectionate  
Boy  
H. D. Eldridge

Mrs. Mercy Akin

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 17 May 1834

New York Saturday Morning  
17 May 1834

Dear Mother,

Ne Sec? Caroline's letter with Mr. Platt's accompanying it. I am considerably disappointed to find matters have taken the turn that appears from his letter because I would like the money, but as transaction with Tyler was rather of a usurious nature, it is as well, perhaps, to make the payment as easy as may be. As to the other demands, I am not a little surprised to learn that he has neglected to collect them – he having assured me when I saw him last winter that he would do so immediately. I regret that there exists a necessity for troubling you with securing and answering letters on the subject of business in which you have no interest, but the circumstance in this case are so peculiar that it would do me an essential service if you would have the subjoined letter copied onto another sheet and send it to Mr. Platt.

O. H. Platt, Esq.  
Seneca Falls

Sir:

Yours of the 3 inst. was received a few days since. When Mr. Freeman returned from your place last winter, he assured me that you would soon remit to me by draft the following sums of money which he informed me had been placed in your hands for collection viz a demand against Mr. Tyler for \$81. Against Mr. Plate balance due \$20. Against Mr. Stockton for balance \$15 together with interest on the whole making an aggregate amount on the 15 February last of about \$128. Mr. Freeman informed me that his arrangement with you was such that there would be no deductions from these sums for collecting. I am extremely anxious to have that business closed as soon as possible, and hope you will soon be able to effect the desired object.

Yours truly,  
(Signed) Mercy Akin

{here date the letter on the  
day you route it}

And now a little of our domestic affairs. And first and most important of all, I have to say that we are all well. We moved last week on Wednesday and find ourselves much more comfortable than when boarding. We have not yet got our parlour furnished, but hope to have it done soon. Col. Rood and his sister called on us night before last. She expressed an anxiety to cultivate an intimacy with Hannah and I think her quite pleasant and companionable. We have got a good girl that does all the work very well and is very good to Johny, who, by the by, is well and grows finely. He has got a mouth full of teeth – eye teeth and all. Hannah got herself a new bonnet, yesterday. It would do you good to see her “shopping”. You would like to know, probably, what kind of bonnet she bought. Well, it is Tuscan! Yes, nothing but Tuscan. The front part is about 2 inches wide or maybe 2 1/2 trimmed inside with Riband ?? and on the outside with Riband and a beautiful artificial “Penny Royal” flower. This evening she is going to call upon a bride just arrived in Town – a Mrs. Staffon. You probably heard me speak of Mr. Stafford as a bachelior about 40 years old with whom I boarded last fall. Well the poor fellow was married last Monday in ????? and has brought his wife to Town. He told me yesterday that “she was quite unwell”. Strange!!

The weather during the last 3 days has been very cold and unpleasant. We had green peas at dinner last Sunday. Today we are to have roast port and beans. Tomorrow a chicken potpie.

And now I will close and leave the rest for Hannah to fill. After saying that we expect to see you here some time this summer. Mr. J. L. Stewart left here last Sunday.

Mrs. Mercy Akins  
Johnstown

Yours Sincerely  
Geo. E. Freeman

## Letter from H. Eldridge to Mercy Akin dated 29 May 1834

Port Byron 29 May 1834

Dear Mother,

I hasten, as I always do when anything of moment happens to me of a nature which I believe will, in the least interest you, to notify you. Now don't let your hand shake, nor your heart jump out of your mouth; pray don't have cat fits or any other thing of such a sort; I am not sick, nor dead, nor --- nor --- nor very badly hurt. But Fate has decided – and – and neither you nor I can, or ought to, complain after. We should do as the patriarch of old did – Stand Still and know the Lord. I am aware that other any besides myself are & will be most tremendously disappointed by the operation. But, I could not do otherwise. You know how unpleasantly I have been situated and I have felt it more particularly since you left, and so in my wisdom, I resolved that I would no longer sojourn in Port Byron, but would sell all my possessions and travel out towards the East among the sons and daughters of the pilgrims that live in the land of steady habits. And I thought preadventure, I might, in my travels or sojourn, find a Ruth, a Rachel, a Mariam, or a Rebecah. But alas, mortals are blinded to ?????inty. The book of fate is thorough. The loving kindness & tender mercy of the Divine Disposer of all events shut to the eyes of finite creatures – It may be for the best, because tis the draws of fate; but had I been consulted, I should have given a dreaded preferer to the plan I had marked out of traveling East in search of a wife. ----- But what avails all this wailing the die is cast, and tis now too late.

Bah! What a pretty prefacer I have written for a letter! Egad, Mother, I hope you are not out of patience – I'll come to it directly only give me time. I'll turn over the draft and give you the rest in the form of a narration.

Now then, Mother, as I promised on the last page, expect to hear the facts as they are “attired in the plain ungarished & sober habitiniruts (?) of naked truths”.

“In the first place” as John says, you know that I sold out to Dr. Carpenter and I intended to have started a fortnight ago with my children for Johnstown ?? & New York & if I could to have found a place on that tour to settle for I believe there are as good situations East as can be found West. But had I not suited myself I intended to have left the children with you provided always you would allow to and just taken a trip to Ohio, Michigan, & Illinois. But now, mark the insult, Dr. Carpenter went from here some time about the 20<sup>th</sup> April with an intention to return the first of May. He has not come yet and Dr. Bullon rec'd a letter from him on Monday last advising him that he will not come at all. So this is an end not only to the bargain, my journeys, & visits, but to the co-partnership of Drs. Button & Carpenter, and, therefore, in consequence of his failure, I remain in Port Byron. To confess the truth, I am not all sorry for any part of the operation. I have completed a settlement with almost every one of my customers & got them notify of interest for all ??? days. I got 25 dollars of Carpenter which with the settlements I have effected is worth \$50. And what is worth more & is much more gratifying to me, I have found who my friends are and can say without boasting that I have more than I had dared to hope – I certainly know that my practice is extending in every direction. I am employed by my many families who used to employ Button. Poor Button was really grieved when he heard Carpenter was not coming. On the whole, I am inclined to think I was, as Dr. Pitney said, a dam'd fool for leaving. Dr. Clary said nothing about it, of course, for I had made and was making considerable inroads upon his practice. But the best of the joke you have not heard. It is the rejoicings of Mrs Draper – I. Duvall – Robinson – Krudrick, & finally, every woman in town – for there were ever so many at once in this town in the same circumstances.

I have built the fence and shall commence the wood house in a few days. I saw Mr. Spring a few days since and he says he has had orders to pay you but he cannot pay you just now but will give his note. I shall go to Auburn in few days & shall call & take his note for the amount. Robinson

has collected the Grundy note; the money is ready for you. I wish, Mother, you would let me have it and enough more to make a hundred dollars for in consequences of my selling and expecting to have rec'd the money without fail, I contracted to pay one hundred dollars on the first of July. I cannot possibly raise the money on my notes & accounts without suing and that, I fear, would injure my business. If I can get a hundred dollars of you, I can pay you the first Jany or May next as may ??? your trust and will give you any security you ???ur. If you can let me have it soon, ?????? or Ross for that & enclose a check on the Cayuga Co. Bank for \$38 and I will not only be much obliged, but most religiously observe your will in time of payments.

It is at present very healthy(?) in this vicinity. The weather has been very warm 2 weeks. Today it is cool & rainy – but 3 weeks ago today, the weather was as cold as in Jany. The foecurst [forest] trees looked after it as in Oct. – Fruit of every description is entirely destroyed.

Romeyn and Mercy are in good health & go to school. They are, Miss Button says, the most interesting children she ever saw. They are good scholars & train very fast. Give my love to Caroline & Mary, Ethan & Dewitt and everybody else, & believe me, Dear Mother, I remain most Sincerely Your most obedient son.

H. D. Eldridge

Mrs Mercy Akin

[Written on the side of page 2]

Mother, I want you should write immediately whether you can let me have the money or not for if not, I must ??? for it elsewhere. Tell Caddy I have a bag full for her and she ??? expect to have some of it ere long. Send my care to Adelia, Jane, & ????? [Hannah], Geo & Johny.

**Letter from Robinson to Mercy Akin dated 17 July 1834**

Port Byron July 17, 1834

Mrs. Mercy Akin

Madam:

Enclosed I send you a certificate of deposit to yr credit in the Cayuga County Bank. Sixty One dollars and thirty eight cents that amount being money collected by me on the note against Suther Grandy turned out to you by A. D. Wood and by me exempted(?) to you for collection. I rec'd this money some time ago. Immediately after its receipt, I informed Doct. Eldridge of it. Some few weeks since, Eldridge informed you wished to have it transmitted to you through the Banks and ???ly this first opportunity has been improved to comply with your wish – I sent this money to the Bank by Eldridge and by the mistake of the clerk of the Bank, the money on the form of the certificate appears to have been deposed by H. D. Eldridge instead of myself. You will please acknowledge the receipt of the certificate.

I am very Resply yrs  
Denison(?) Robinson

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 19 August 1834

New York Tuesday  
19 Aug 1834

Dear Mother,

In compliance with your request, I now devote a few minutes to the subject of writing to inform you that we got safe to town on Friday evening and found all things about the house safe. We got a girl on Saturday and are beginning to live again. Han. Visited Mrs. Burdicks yesterday. Mrs. B. returned from Easton about a week ago & says that Grandfather is very feeble and that Aunt Susy has had another shock of palsy which has almost entirely deprived her of the power of speech, motion, and sight. Miss Ann Rood called yesterday while Han was gone. You will doubtless recollect having heard us speak of Mr. Stafford who was a fellow Boarder of ours last spring and who got married about the first of May. They have been in the country most of the summer. It is but little more than a week since they returned to the City and on Sunday last Mrs. Stafford died of cholera – thus how ----- happiness blasted in ----- died of cholera [rest of page torn away] [At top of next page, it continues] 31 cases & 17 deaths. We have been as yet quite well and hope to continue so, but whether we shall is not for us to know at present. Within the last few days, several very highly respectable individuals have fallen by the pestilence; yet, we feel bound by every consideration to be regular in our habits and prudent in our diet and leave the rest to the mercy of him who spareth whomsoever it pleaseth him.

The weather during the last 3 days has been extremely cool and fine. There is no excitement or account of the cholera. The cases are so few that nobody feels alarmed on the subject. We shall expect to hear from you before long.

Mrs. Mercy Akin  
Johnstown

I am as ever,  
Your very Respectfy,  
G. E. Freeman

## Letter from H. Eldridge to Mercy Akin dated 19 April 1835

Port Byron Sunday Evening 19 April 1835

Dear Mother,

Doubtless you have been waiting long and anxiously to hear from me with an enclosure of a draft to the amt of Spring's note. I saw him on Wednesday last and he says that he will pay me a week from tomorrow – and I will, I assure you, forward it as soon as may be thereafter.

There has been some sickness among us for the last few weeks; mostly of an inflammatory or catankal character, and confined principally to children – Romeyn & Mercy have had but only a slight brush of it – so light as not to require any remedy. Eliza, however, has had a tough time of it and has not recovered yet, tho" (though) able to be about most of the time. I have too had a touch of it, but I worked mine off[f] by splitting wood & rails.

I have just received a "line" from Freeman who says they are all well, but I suppose you got the news sooner and by the same ??????? (E. P. Ross, Esq.) I learned by Freeman's "line" that John of Kent and Adelia are soon to be at Johnstown. Give them our love and tell them that could they make it convenient to visit Port Byron, they will receive a most hearty welcome and we pledge ourselves to make a visit with us as pleasant as they could wish and if they do not come, they may expect the most thundering anathema's to be pronounced against them. If Adelia wishes ever to see either her old friend and Brother Eldridge or the children, she must come here. I do not intend ever to go East again tin I get rich, and that is paramount to saying I never intend going. I told Greeman that if Adelia & Hannah should be at Johnstown together, I would meet them there with the children, but I cannot for I shall have to go to Canada next month for the purpose of taking or getting possession of the Canada Farm which will use up all the time I can spare this season from my professional affairs.

Things go on here at about the old pace. I can not recollect anything of especial importance having occurred save that Catherine Way has a fine daughter & Eliza Nicholson another fine boy which weighed 11 lb & 11 oz. And that Betsey, George Sommer's wife [actually George Somer's wife], got to bed last Thursday morning with a fin healthy boy and died at 8 o'clock in the evening. She flowed to death. [written very faintly] She was buried yesterday here in the vilage [village]. Doct. Doty attended her. He left her in the morning, but it seems he doubted her doing well. They discovered she grew worse about noon and sent for him again & for Doct. Clary, but alas, too late. Nothing could be or was done for her. Her babe is alive. I do not recollect to have ever seen a more affected family than they. George, poor soul, seemed as tho he could not stay and yet there was no childish exhibition of grief ??????. The friends, I believe, attach considerable blame to the Doct.

We have had a very cold week this last past to Friday last. The snow fell some 3 or 4 inches. The frost has been pretty severe. We have shudered [shuddered] some with the cold, but more thro' fear that fruit would be injured. Tonight, tis warmer and we have had as a Dutchman would say, "some dunder & blexim". We all send our love to you all; and desire to be remembered by you & "Aunt Caddy", Jane & Mary – Ethan & Dewitt and to all the circle of acquaintances.

I remain as ever,  
Dear Mother,  
Your devoted Servt & affectionate Son,

Mrs. Mercy Akin

H. D. Eldridge

## Letter from H. Eldridge to Mercy Akin dated 5 May 1835

[5 May 1835]

Dear Mother,

Esq. Spring called last Thursday and paid me Seventy dollars on the note. It was not all that was due. This note was for sixty seven (\$67) dollars and drew(?) monthly interest on it amounting to \$71.28 – and I took his note for the balance of \$1.28. But having an opportunity of sending today to the Bank, I concluded to do so and send the amt. I had rather than wait for the balance.

Mother, why in the name of sense? Can't I hear from you? Is it possible that I am so soon forgotten. Feels it petty in you to neglect me in this manner. Do you think that because I am again settled [settled?] in the world, I do not wish to hear from you, as I was want? If so, let me once for all assure you that I have not lost one fraction of the high esteem in which I have even since my first acquaintance held you and your family and since which by the subsequent generosity I have experienced at your hands has improved (?) into such esteem – no, love itself – that you will ever be as ???? & dear as father, brother, & sisters. Had I believed that a second union in marriage would so have estranged you from me, I declare I would never have taken the step. But, no, I will not – can not believe that you, Mother, or any of my dear sisters and brothers have forgotten Eldridge. Do for heavens sake give me some tokens of memory just to lighten my ??????

We are all well – no, not quite ????? Eliza is rather pukish – not very bad thought I cannot help it. Some little Ducchman (?) I suppose is raising the ???? with her stomach!

Eliza get on exceeding well with the children – they seem to be much attached to each other. Eliza has a motherly supervision over them. If she has erred at all it is by an overrerring attachment & indulgence. I am perfectly satisfied that she has never thus far abused them by any act or a cross word. I am so far well pleased with her management.

When Freeman was here, he gave D. B. Smith high encouragement that you would sell your house here and that he would have the first offer of purchase. Mrs. Smith is teasing us to death with her ever lasting clang of, “is Mrs. Akin, do you think, ever coming back? How long are you going to stay in her house?” and ten thousand 1000 other such questions. I wish you would let us know something about the matter that we may answer definitely on the subject. I am persuaded the great reason why he wishes to purchase is that Brach intends constructing a mill over on this side the creek and establishing mills here and that Smith intends to erect a store on this side the canal and wants this house for a residence for himself or Brach; and I am at a loss which. At any rate, if Brach does erect mills on this side, it will enhance property 50 percent and it cannot fall at any rate. This house and lot if occupied by a careful tenant will be worth as much ten years hence as it is now and perhaps twice as much. So, you have my opinion that you had better not sell it at present and second, pray let me have the first offer.

Nothing new has happened since my last except the marriage of the Green, our Baptist clergyman, to Mis Phimb and a bit more that Nancy Barbour is married! Whew – but when, or to whom, I have not been able to learn.

Give my best regard to all the uncles, aunts, & cousins in Johnstown. Tell them all that to them I make my best bow and desire to be remembered to and by them. Alababa most especially. My love to Aunt Caddy, to Jane & Mary, Ethan & Dewitt. And to you, Mother, in addition to all filial(?) love, I subscribe myself.

Your very humble ???? & affectionate Son,

H. D. Eldridge

Mercy Akin

[Note: the date of this letter was calculated by using the dates of the Spring Note in conjunction with the Eldridge letter dated 1835.04.19.]

## Letter from John Stuart to Mercy Akin dated 30 June 1835

Kent, CT June 30, 1835

Respected Friends,

After a long time of remaining silent and waiting for Adelia to write—for I told her that I would not—she should once more write a letter home, but I have given up. First, I shall say to you that we got home fine. Second, that we are all well. Third, Judson runs alone. Fourth, we have been looking for Mr. Freeman and Lady here for a few days past, but they have not yet arrived. Fifth and last, the furnace starts this week.

I have been thinking about making you a call within a few days, but I have given it up for the present. I have been thinking of going West(?). Everything goes along about right. Some folks are making great calculations about the 4 July. XXXX all of the youngsters are as usual. Boys all the XXXX are da. Your friends are all well and in the usual good spirits. Jane, the Widow Tiptoe, alias Widow Berry, was to have been married a few days since, but before it was consummated, her intended was taken sick and is now dead. I must draw to a close, for I am in a great haste. Please give our respects to all inquiring and believe me as usual. Write soon and by doing you confer a favor.

J. L. Stuart

Mrs. Mercy Akin and Family

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 27 July 1835

New York 27 July 1835

Dear Mother,

Above I send my note for the amount of the Tillman Mortgage which I understand has been paid and deposited in the Bank and a certificate of deposit sent to you. I have dated my note on the day the money was paid to Robinson so that you shall lose nothing on the score of interest. You can have the amt inserted in the note for which purpose you will perceive I have left a blank place in the note. I should have filled it up myself only that I did not know the precise amount. All that is necessary for you to do is to write your name across the back of it and enclose it to me. It will be of great service to me if I can get it before the 4 August. If it will be any more satisfactory to you, I will soon give you Uncle John's note in exchange for this that I now send you. Once more, I beg most solemnly to assure you that your money shall be safe under any contingency.

I had a letter from Zeb Ross a few days ago. He said that he had been compelled to defer coming on as I expected by the illness of Elmore, but that at the time of writing, he was much better and that he should start for the city in a very few days. I now look for him by every boat. Since I came down, I have sold about \$350. Business will begin to open in the course of 2 or 3 weeks. I am preparing for it. I bought an Invoice of goods on Saturday amounting to about \$1600 and shall, in all probability have in hand in the course of 2 weeks, 10 or 12 thousand dollars worth of goods. I have found my way into 2 or 3 Southern customers which I shall walk into in good style.

Hannah and the babies are well. Han has made her a new dress of her old cloak and it is very genteel. The health of the City is unusually good. I presume you hear it said that there is cholera here, but it is false. There is none and has been none and probably will be none.

Give our compliments to the children and friends and believe me as ever,

Mrs. Mercy Akin  
Johnstown

Most Resptfy  
Your Son,

Geo. E. Freeman

**Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 22 Aug 1835**

New York 22 Augt 1835

Dear Mother,

I was W. Pollen this morning and he told me he was going up to your place this evening and would be happy to take any Commands from me. I therefore embrace the opportunity to say that we are all well and that business begins to be quite brisk. We have had as much as we could do for the last 10 days and shall not probably get much leisure hereafter until the final close of business.

Ross came on after a long while and the arrangement with him is completed and all things seem very promising. I have not heard from Uncle John, brother John or Doct. Eldridge since I came to the City, but through D. B. Smith, who left the City about a week since, I heard from brother (that may be) Elmore who was at that time better. Their new firm is Smith & Ross. Our firm is Freeman & Ross as you will perceive by a card which I enclose. I have only time to request that you will give my love to all the children and believe me as ever,

G. E. Freeman

Please let us hear from you. Aren't you coming down this fall? You may expect Elmore there soon.

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 21 September 1835

New York 21 Sept 1835

Dear Mother,

I have sent a note to Uncle John signed by myself and payable to his order at the Bank of America in this City which he will send to you to get discounted at the Montgomery County Bank. You may ask Uncle Nathan to do it without your name, but if he insists when upon your endorsement, I hope you will put your name upon it. The object of it is to meet the note that I got done when I was there in July. That it may not appear strange to you that I want a renewal of this paper, I will explain thus. All the debts owing by the old firm of Benedict etc will become payable between this time and the middle of November amounting to something like \$5000, and I shall not be able to collect all that is due to the concern before Spring at which time I have no doubt but the old business can all be squared up and you be troubled no more. It will be necessary for me to get the above note renewed once more in order to avoid the payment of it until our customers begin to come in in the Spring. All things go well and I shall close up the business of the old firm with a nett [net] gain of at least \$1500. Our business this Fall has been, thus far, first rate. We are getting new customers every day and getting better prices for our goods. I have arranged my old affairs on very good terms though in order to do it to the best advantage, I have been compelled to pay some of my small debts in cash, but the most are payable in one, two, and three years. The whole amount that I have to pay is about \$1200 which I shall be able to do without interfering with our present business. I have not yet got the money on the Smith Mortgage, but expect it soon. I have everything to encourage me in my prospects at present. Our business is very profitable beyond a doubt and yet, as is the case with all kinds of business in the City, we shall occasionally be "short" and need a lift from our friends, but as you are a woman and as Uncle John is prepared to stand by in the "day of trial", I will endeavor to avoid asking you for the use of your name after one more renewal of the note to Uncle Nathan. Ross says that David Smith has told him that we should have the use of his name when it was necessary which together with Uncle John will afford us all the Banking facilities that we shall be likely to want. Ross is now at Port Byron collecting his money, but I expect him here probably in the course of 2 weeks.

Hannah and the babies are well and say you must try and come down this Fall and see us. The daughter is named – and what do you think it is? Don't know? Well, I'll tell you – it is "Caroline Akin" and for the further information of yourself and family, I will inform you that she is now undergoing an operation on her face which we are assured and believe will effectually remove the mark leaving only a slight scar. She is the smartest little huzzy I ever saw. She is getting to be a perfect mocking bird. She echos the sweep and almost everything she hears. Gets up by the chairs and shoves them around the room. Stands alone and will walk in a few days. She is withal very go.... [paper torn] John continues a good boy and is very fond of .... [paper torn]. John Stewart was here last week and says .... [paper torn] "all well" and that Adelia will come to the City .... [paper torn]. Remember us to the family and friends and .... [paper torn] believe me as ever,

Resplfy  
Your Son,

Mrs. Mercy Akin  
Johnstown

Geo. E. Freeman

P.S. If you should be at a loss how to dispose of the note that is above spoken of, you can show this letter to Uncle N. I want him to send me a draft for the amount less discent prem, and should be very glad to get it by the time the other note is payable which is the first day of October.

Freeman

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 23 November 1835

New York 23 Nov 1835

Dear Mother,

I have opportunity by M. McArthur of sending you a few lines free of charge and of course hasten to improve it. And in the first place, I have to say that we are all well and that the babies get on well. Secondly, allow me to congratulate you upon the happy occasion just passed at your house. It is one upon which you, as a Mother, should feel gratified because a daughter is established in the world, and in this instance of which I speak, I think well established. [Caroline was married to Alymer/Elmer Ross on October 26, 1835]. Thirdly, I have to say that our business has been quite as good as I have at any time anticipated. We have sold as many goods as we wish to sell this Fall and to good men. Ross expresses himself well satisfied with what we have done, and the prospect of what we can hereafter do. Many of the men that I sold to in the Spring have not been in town this Fall. Being far off, they only come once a year. Some of those that have been in do not pay up, but I have rec'd \$850 from Uncle John within a week or two which will do considerable towards helping me through the winter. I have got about \$8000 due me of which I do not expect to get much until Spring. I owe for goods bought by the firm of Benedict ??? something less than \$3000, and the balance of what I owe is to you and family and Uncle John.

In conclusion, what do you say to coming to the City next Spring. I'll board you for about what it costs you to live there. Just let me know so as to make calculations about renting a house.

J. L. Stewart was here a few days since and says they are all well in Kent. Do you hear anything from the Doct.? {Hiram Eldridge, presumeably] How do you think he feels towards ELC(??)?

???? how does that dear little red head come on? As attentive as ever? It commenced snowing here yesterday morning and continued all day and today it has turned into one of the coldest, most dreary rains you most ever saw. Our streets are a perfect slush. From this time until Spring, we shall have but little to do and I am glad of it for I want rest. I have used myself almost up this Fall, but think I am pretty well paid for it.

Please give our love to the children and the friends, and believe me very sincerely,

Mrs. Mercy Akin  
Johnstown

Your dutiful Son,  
Geo. E. Freeman

P.S. Hannah wears a pink, silk hat this winter with white feathers. White & Blk Beaver hats are real ton (?) – cottage shape – Han has got a new fig'd sight silk dress and has been about 4 weeks getting a mantle – Sometimes she gets cloth and sometimes marino(?), but how it will turn out at last is more than I can tell. We had a little "Sorie" at our house a few evenings since at which we were honoured with the comp'y of Mr. & Mrs. Pollen, Miss Ann and her dear little Mr. Jessup besides some dozen others.

**Letter from John Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 26 December 1835**

Sennett Dec'mr 26, 1835

Mrs. Akin,

I inform you that we are well and it is a general time of health in our Country. We should be very gald to hear from you and family, but I do not know as I shall for Caroline will not write me. I rec'd a letter from G.E.F. [George Freeman] a few days since stating his family were all well, & he says Caroline is not only pretyest [prettiest] girl in town, but the smartest and Jonny is not far behind her. All this, I presume, he has told you.

He has sent a note to me to be endorsed and to return it to you saying you will know what to do with it. So, I will send it. I have no particular news to write.

M. Akin

Yours very respectfully,

John Freeman

Editor's Note: John Freeman is George Freeman's "Uncle John" who bankrolled him in all of his business dealings.

**Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 25 April 1836**

New York 25 April/'36 (?)

Dear Mother,

It is only about 9:00 in the evening, therefore, I have thought I would avail myself of the opportunity of sending a few lines by Mr. Fanner(?) to inform you that we are all well except myself, and only for a bad cold – I yesterday sent per mail a certificate of deposit to Uncle Nathan to pay the \$1,000 note which you endorsed of which I have no doubt he will inform you before you get this – we are now heel over head in business and shall be until about the first of July. I want you to ask Ethan where Mr. Arthur bought his crockery and if he says he bought of me, ask him if he did not buy of somebody else. Also, I have sold him a little bill of about \$25 and strongly suspect he has bought some elsewhere. I should like to know how it is.

I have rented my house uptown and concluded to board another year. We shall stay where we now are (93 Greenwich Street). We have a parlor and bedroom and on the whole shall be very comfortably situated. Hannah says she is coming up there this summer. I had a letter from Stewart a few days ago. He said Adelia was better than she had been. Johnny and Sissie are very well and grow finely and are busy cruising – we wish you would -- some of you -- write us and let us know how you are getting on. I must be excused from writing any more tonight.

Your son,

Geo. E. Freeman

Tuesday, 2:00 P.M.

I find Han has been too lazy to write, therefore, I will just say that at present our city is a perfect cloud of dust.

Freeman

Johnny says I must write Grandma and Uncle DeWitt for him.

## Letter from Caroline Ross to Mercy Akin dated 12 June 1836

Port Byron Thursday, April 28, 1836

Dear Mother, sisters, & brothers,

I write these few lines that you may not look for Mr. Ross at Johnstown this spring. He has been to N.Y. but on account of his health did not make you a call. He has not been very well all this spring – was sick three days in N.Y. So that he was obliged to lay by (as the term goes) and when he got to Finday's was so unwell and it was raining very hard, he thought he had better come directly home. He came as far as Utica – call[ed] a Dr. [and] was thirty six hours sick abed and got home last Tuesday morning in the first packet. While he was below, the Dr's advised him to go to the South. How would you like to have us move there? He thinks some times he had better go. He is some better so as to attend to his business, but not well.

I am some disappointed. I expected those things when Ross come. Keep them for me or send them when you have a good chance to me. Don't forget the stirncty poob vallena. Jane need not send that gingum like our dresses. I have altered it already. Finished it this morning. I wish I knew what you have concluded upon about pappering [papering] the sitting room. If you do not think you can afford it, and it was your wish(?) I would peell of(f) the papper and white wash the walls. I wish Jane would write me a few lines immediately that I might know what to do.

Eldridge is moving today, he says. I must tell you his things slipt of[f] the sleigh - that the first day of May has already come. With him it comes too - about once in four years. His meaning is, I suppose, that he mooves [moves] once in four years.

I am getting my things together as fast as possible. Have succeeded pretty well in dooing so. Have got all but my tin which I shall get the last of the week. Hoselton works for Tull. He is bailing my pots and kectles [kettles]. I shall commence house cleaning next Monday. We are to send for Ester Carter (the girl I talked of last winter) Sunday. She lives in Cato.

Freeman's family are all well. Stuart left N.Y. a day or so previous to Ross' arrival there. He says Dealia is no better but intended to come to Johnstown soon. The Dr. advised here to travel this summer. Tell her if she is able to come, she must come here too and one of the girls must come along too and stay the summer with me, but if Dealia is not able to stand the journey here, let me know and I will meet her at Johnstown if I can leave home. I wish Dealia could get some of Lewis's cough drops. They are made at Watterloo. They are recommended very highly for a cough. They certainly could not do her any hurt. Mrs. Daniels says she believes if Charles had taken another bottle, he would have been a well man now. Charles Daniels is ded [dead]. He died a week last Saturday. Also, Able Withey. He died of the black jaundice. Cany Dows that yoused [used] to be husband is dead too. His name is Goodrich Troot. Warren Johnson was taken up for dead yesterday. The horse threw him and he was draged [dragged] some ways by the foot in the stirrup. They think, however, that he is not to die this hich.(?)

I have got over the deaths. Now for the births. To commence, I will begin with Mrs. D. B. Smith. She has got a daughter a month. So pleased enough too, they are. Mrs. Perkins has a son, Martty. That [There] was one Greenfield had a son, but lost it. Mrs. John P. Daves also has a son. Mrs. Hedger too has a son. Don't you think P. By'n is blessed with sons and daughters.

Ross saw Bill Vessle in Albany and, Miss Jane, who do do [sic] ye guess he heard of? But did not see. I see Miss J. cheeks turn a little of the flush here when she reads the above question – a senetor [senator], if you please. Maen (?) had the goodness to condisend [condescend] and ask my gentleman – Oh I forgot to say – to take my gentleman by the hand and say, “shall I have the pleasure, sir, of conducting ya to his lordship?” Mr. Henry is in the City. I saw him a few minutes since, but son of all to ?????, my gentleman had not the confidence necessary to be ushered in his

lordship's presence in the presence of the State's gentry. Lawrence will go below in a few days. Put your hair and dress in order. You may possibly have a call. Mr. & Mrs. Rob may make ya a call. Be ??? ready also for this.

The Babtest [Baptist] Meeting House was dedicated week before last. It is quite pretty. They [sic] it has much the appearance of the Presbaterian [Presbyterian] church which was burned. We are building another. The frame is up. Up to the rafters. It is to be furnished by the fust [first] of July. Write to me soon, some of you and, Mother, I expect, will be out to see me when I get all settled to see how nice I live. So Good by. Please except our good wishes all from your dutifull [dutiful] and loving children.

E. P. Ross

???? Ross made me a present of an india [India] ruber [rubber] apron. He says Han. [Hannah] has got on[e] too. They are very much worn for common. The price is 10 shillings. Send and get you one.

[Even though this letter was signed E. P. Ross, it is almost certainly written by Caroline. This looks like Caroline's handwriting. The grammar and spelling mistakes are typical of Caroline. And, the subject matter is not something that a man would write about. Also, the stationery is the same as she used in a later letter.]

[The date of this letter is difficult to decipher. The last digit rather looks like an "8", but the discussion about a possible visit by Adelia would make one believe that it is a "6". Adelia did take a trip like that discussed in this letter in the summer of 1837.]

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 13 July 1836

New York 13 July 1836

Dear Mother,

Enclosed I send you a note for \$1000 which I hope you will [feel] perfectly in endorsing. If you should feel perfectly safe in doing so, I wish you to do it and hand it to N. P. Wells, Esq. And say to him [that] he will serve us very materially if he will discount it and send us a draft for the amt less the discount and premium. Ross has now gone west for the purpose of collecting together the rest of his funds, but I am afraid he will not be able to get them into an available shape until after harvest. There are two causes that have operated to make our finances rather short just at this time. One is that I have recently had to pay \$900 which I owed Caroline, and the other is that we have had about \$1500 to pay for 2 notes of Ross which he gave our firm for part of his capitail [sic] expecting Elmore would collect and remit in season to meet them, but which has not been the case. You may at any time you want the interest of the money I owe you make a draft on me at one day sight for which Mr. Wells will be glad to give you his money.

Are my wife and babies at your house? If so, give my love to them and tell them I am well. I suppose they met Ross at Pokeepsie [Poughkeepsie] on Monday and went up the River with him, but whether they have stopped at Johnstown or gone on to Port Byron with him, I do not know. If they are there, tell Hannah to write me immediately.

Yours very truly,

Geo. E. Freeman

**Letter from John Stuart to Ethan Akin dated 15 August 1836**

Kent Aug'st 15, 1836

Dear Sir [written to Ethan],

Yours is at house saying that all is well & in return I shall say that we are all well with the exception of Adelia which is rather more comfortable than she was two weeks since. She does not cough as much & has not raised as much as she did awhile before. She has been taking the syrup of Mullens & motherswort & milk & some other old woman notions together with a host of other medicine so we can't tell which is relieving. Jane & I made a bet last week that mother would be here & I won. So she is pretty much broke down. Jane says that I must tell you if you can't since any better news in regard to her brick top that you need not send any more such pitiful news. Sorry to hear that you had given up the ideal of making us a visit, but you must do as circumstances seem to require. We have not heard a word in some time from any of our friends from any quarter except from you. Please give our respects to all ?????? I believe as ever

Yours truly

Ethen Akin

J. L. Stuart

**Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 15 January 1837**

New York, Sunday  
15 Jan'y 1837

Dear Mother,

I would have written you some two days ago if I could have found time, but could not. It affords me great pleasure to be able to say that Hannah is improving much faster than we had expected she would do. She is so smart that she has this morning washed and dressed her baby. She is going to discharge her nurse today, but has got a small girl to assist in taking care of the "children". At present everything looks very encouraging although at one certain time since she has been ill our Doctor thought she stood but a small chance of getting well. The boy (who, by the by is yet nameless) is getting on finely. I think he will improve very rapidly under the more immediate care of his Mother. The other "babies" are well and fat as pigs and very good.

I had a letter from Smith & Ross a few days since requesting me to sent a certain store for them and have it ready for them by the first of march. All of which I have done. So, you will perceive it is settled that they are coming to the City. Their letter contained nothing of any interest to the family. When Caroline gets here, I should not be surprised to see you coming along.

Remember us to the children and believe me –

Very truly yours, etc.

Geo. E. Freeman

[Note: I concluded that the year of this letter is 1837 even though one could argue that the last digit looks more like a nine; however, January 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a Sunday in 1837 – not 1839.]

**Letter from John Stuart to Ethan Akin dated 7 March 1837**

Kent March 7, 1837

Dear Brother,

I now take a few moments to write you & say to you that we are all as usual. Adelia is about as she has been for some time past, but on the whole, I think she rather fails, or in other words, I think that she does not appear quite as smart & I fear what the Spring may bring forth. But if you write, please not write anything that will discourage. I leave the furnace business on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of April so that I shall be at liberty to go where I please. If Adelia is able, we shall come home as soon as the weather is pleasant & the traveling gets good. But this depends entirely on the health of us. I wrote to Jane some time since & have not had any kind of an answer. Please, on the receipt of this, write & let us know how you you [sic] all be. I don't know that I shall do anything this season & if I do not, I shall have leisure enough.

Ethen Akin

Yours nrth(?) respc'l,

J. L. Stuart

## Letter from Caroline Ross to Mary Akin dated 4 June 1837

Port Byron June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1837

Dear Sister Moll –

This is the first time in a long while that I take pen in hand to inform ya how we poor bodys get along here in Port Byron. As for me, I will tell you I had the fevor [fever] ague after I got home quite hard. So one day I did not set up any and after I got well of the fevor [fever] ague, I had the inflamation (sic) in my eyes so that I could hardly see. They were so bad when Ross wrote to Mother, I could not write ya a line or two as I intended to save ya a penny or two by so doing. Ross is some better than he was when we were down, but the pain in his side continues. But he gains a little more strength on the whole. I consider him a little better if his side continues to pain him until next September, we talk of going to the interior of Florida. The Dr. recommend his going South which we shall do if he gets no better soon.

Cornelia grows as fat as butter, they all say. You can't imagine how she has since ya saw her. She stands up by chairs and steps very well. She mocks the boat horns when she hears them. Isn't that cunning for a child 9 months old?

We have papered the sitting room. It looks very smart. I assure you, I am now all settled and expect my girl tomorrow morning. I have been without one some of the time.

The young people have had one dance since ya left. A ??? company, they say. Dr. Walldas(?) girls have all joined the church while we were gone. The young folks have also had some two or three parties. One was at Almira Hendericks. The Welheys Girls and all were there. Halsey has gone home. He started last Thursday and is to be back in a fortnight or three weeks. I do not know which. He will probably give you a call on his return home – so he told Ross. Don't let him know that I wrote anything to you about his calling on you if he comes. Mrs. Johnson is they say. She can't pin her hankerchief [handkerchief] as smooth as she yous [used] to could. Dr. Clarey of Troopsville is married again to Amy Bennet.

I have been looking for Delia and Jane all this week. I wish some of you would let me know how she is. Harriett Wethery(?) was agind [again] to Niagry [Niagra] Falls with Jane and Georn (?) and a somebody else whose name I have forgotten this Fall. Say is it so – say all about it when you write that I may put my house and things in order. Of course you will pay me a visit. I shall be happy to wait on ya all.

Mary, how do you make out with your dress. Is there enough to make it? You must let me know if there be not enough. I will send that which I reserved for Cornelia. I have bee sorry that I did not leave you more. I am afraid you have ascant pattern.

Mother, Edward Akin, Uncle David[‘s] Edward, was home from Arkansas yesterday. He looks just as he yous [used] to do with this exception – only some fleasheyer [fleshier], fatter than he was when you saw him. He says he has got too [two] babys [babies]. I expect him here Thursday or Friday again to make a visit – how long I don't know. He says he should like to visit Johnstown, but can't as he shall not go any near you than he already is. Has been to [two] month from home and has but one more too [to] stay.

Does Ethan work as hard as ever? How is his cough? Tell him for me not ...lift so hard for it will be the means of ...th. It was lifting hard that hurt Ross so he must be carefull [careful] of himself for no one cares when he works for them how much he hurts himself provides [provided] he gets his work done. McArthur can't make him well once he gets sick. He don't care how much he kills himself if he gets only earn ??? his work done. I think of Ethan a great many times. I am afraid

he is at the moment, I am thinking, perhaps, he is hurting himself now. E is too ambitious, I am afraid.

How is Dewitt? Does he learn his book fast? Tell him to hurry or Cornelia will go ahead of him yet. Mercy & Romeyn are well. They were here yesterday. Goodby, Sister Molly. Let me hear from ya soon.

Caroline Ross,  
Your loving Sis

Merce comes home in expected – so the story goes, they say. I did not expect ya would send her. I don't know how true it is.

**Letter from John Stuart to Mary Akin dated 4 September 1837**

Kent, CT Sept. 4, 1837

Dear Sis,

According to agreement I now write you and first I have to say that we got home very well and on Monday following after we left. Adelia stood the journey well. We went to keeping house the Wensdy [Wednesday] after and have got things pretty much straightened again. Since I have been a writing, Adelia has told me twice already to have you write immediately & tell her about Mrs. Freeman & Jane, etc. Adelia has been since she left you about the same as she was when with you. She thinks she is not quite as smart yesterday & today as common, but there is not much difference. We have got a very good girl now, but how long she will stay I cannot say. I should have written before but the truth is I had not paper, pen, nor ink that I could find, so you must excuse. I do not think of anything to fill up the sheet with that will entertain you. We find it quite as pleasant where we now live as we expected. Doct. Everrett called on us soon after we got home, but said nothing was any more favorable then when last saw her. I do expect that he has pretty much given up. Adelia is a taking a syrrup that she got from a Newspaper receipt at present. Nothing more at this time. Give our respects to all inquiring & belive us as ever yours,

Miss Mary L. Akin

J. L. Stuart

M: Write immediately

## Letter from Royal Slocum to Mercy Akin dated 2 August 1838

Easton August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1838

Dear Sister,

In compliance with the promise I made you when you was here to inform you provided that there was any material change in our father's health, that I would inform you of is.

Last Friday night he was visited with a shock of the palzy or Epilepsy – by which he has been deprived of the use of his right side which leaves him in a verry [very] helpless state. Yet, he retains his mental faculties in a surprising degree. I think he will not stay with us long. I can perceive quite perceptibly that he fails every day. Yet, some think that he may stand it some length of time.

If you want to see him once more in time, I think you had better come down immediately on receipt of this. Sussannah's health is about the same as when you was here. Matthew's wife is again afflicted the rheumatic complaint she can scarcely raise out of her chair. The rest of the family & connections are in usual health. Alexander has been to see Daniel & Margaret Wellen. They were all well with the exception of the 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter who was quite unwell. Says he found them in his thinking in verry needy circumstances.

It is now one o'clock & I must close in haste to meet the mail.

Mercy Akin

Royal Slocum

## Letter from John Stuart to Ethan Akin dated 24 August 1838

North Kent, Ct. August 24, 1838

Beloved Brother,

As I was sitting all alone a thought came into my mind that I would immediately(?) write to my friends as I have not heard a word from Johnstown since I left. So, I am now at it & hope that you will follow suit & direct yours to No. Kent as soon as is convenient & by way of giving you our idea (?) of what we may be here yet.

I shall say to you that the Morristown Rail Road which is to pass through Kent is under contract & ????? up on it within 16 miles of us & the company persevering as fast as possible. This road connects Albany with the Sound at Bridgeport & it will be sp????y [paper torn] with & I now look forward when I can eat breakfast at home & be in Buffalo in about 18 hours to sup. Since I came from Johnstown, we have done a very good business & money is about as plenty as it ought to be. We have been for the last 2 months a buying considerable Butter & Cheese which we have done very well upon. We have cleared a few Hundred Dollars in the last five weeks with but little trouble, but we may loose it in the next. So it goes.

I am well & in good spirits. My respects to all and as nothing ??? to write, please accept this hoping that it may find you well with a long life & pleasant one for you. And believe me as are your well wisher & brother.

John L. Stuart

Ethan Aikin, Esq.

NB Don't forget write me soon.

J. L. Stuart

North Kent, Ct. August 24, 1838

Resppcetut [Respectant] Sister,

According to agreement & request, I now write you trusting that it will be as happily received as it is pleasant for me to think of times past with all of its troubles & cares & owe more to write old friends and tried friends & friends indeed. And, first by the way of filling up this sheet, I shall say that I am well & as fat as arn(?) & also Father's Family. I don't know of anything that will interest you that has transpired here amongst your acquaintances of ????? interest. I do nothing only stay about the store which by the way as yet has been a very good business & when I want to get out, I start out & buy a fine cattle & sheep. I was off pretty much all of the time last week. I think of going to New York next Monday or Tuesday. I have not heard a word from any of our friends since I was at Johnstown – only Freeman. I am a going to write to Jane immediately & Caroline. I will trouble them to read it. If they won't take the trouble to write me.

It is said that John Mills & Mary, Jewel Deucon Mill's wife's daughter is to be married soon. So they go, in my opinion, simple fools if they don't want somebody to take care of them, I am mistaken & as this is the substance of my heard, please give my respects to all inquiring friends & Mother, in particular, and believe as I'm yours.

John L. Stuart

Miss Mary L. Akin

NB. Please write soon & let me hear about Johnstown & its inhabitants, etc.

## Letter from Caroline Ross to Mercy Akin dated 14 October 1838

Port Byron Oct 14 & 1838

Dear Mother, Sister, and Brothers,

After this long time, I have made out to commence writing, whether or no I shall finish it (my letter) I must leave [leave] for time to tell. Many are the times I have set, but as often, I have been obliged to omit it. We arrived home safe. I found things in a tolerable good condition. Found my Cornelia not very well. She was cutting her eye teeth. Has got four more since. She is now very well. Helen is not well nor has not been for a week past. She has a bad diarrhea. I think her a little better today. I have been very busy since my return home with my garden and doing up my preserves. Mother, I preserved some of the china apples. They were very good. Also, peaches, pears, quinces – and dried raspburys, plumes, and cherries. Made my carpet and a feather [feather] bed and have had Mary Akin Van Pelt 3 week a sewing. Besides all this, my children are very worrison (Helen seta alone these four weeks). These are my excuses for not writing before.

What can you guess if you should try hard too. Should you guess that Eldredge family have moved to be our nearest neighbour [neighbor]. Well, they shurely [surely] have. It is 4 weeks since they trouble us not, whether we them. Hectfield has bought his house and they were obliged to come.

There has also another [another] important affair taken place – that is, Ross has bought old Billy Devall[’s] farm. You know, Mother, there is all kinds of fruit. I am very much pleased with the purchase.

Mary – did you know that Hannah Wince (Hannah Wethy) is dead[?] She died about six weeks ago. She left a babe 8 days old and it died 3 days after she did. They were brought to this place and buried.

Mother, Ross will go to New York the last of this week and will think be at Johnstown in a fourneigh [fortnight] or 3 weeks at the furtherest and if you intend Dewitt to come home with him, you must certainly have him ready by that time. If you can spare him, I should like to have him come very much or Mary. Either of them that you would rather have come. Let them be ready at a minute. Worrying, I have, often of Ethen [Ethan]. I would like to know how he and Mc have made out. Whether they have come to any terms or not. Now you will please excuse me from writing any more for I have a very bad sick head ache today. I have had it all the day. I set today apart from the rest to write and I new [knew] if I let it pass it would be to[o] late for you to get the word of Ross Going to NY.

Caroline

Mercy Akin & family – Give our love to all inquiring friends. I have been expecting William Rood and lady and his brother and his wife here.

We commence house cleaning tomorrow morning – So good by[e] all – In Trust(?)

NB please to burn this letter when you have red [read] it and oblige me much.

**Letter from George Henry to Mercy Akin dated 31 October 1838**

Oswego, Oct 31, 1838

Dear Mother,

Agreeably to promise, I give you a short history of our journey home. We are here, that is certain. Friday evening, about 5 o'clock we landed at Oswego in as comfortable a situation as could be expected under all the circumstances of the case. Ethan, DeWitt, Mary, Edward, John, Mercy, George Brerost(?), Clement Sadleir, etc, etc, was not quite as cross as he was while in Johnstown; but to tell the truth, he was cross enough. Jane has been very well since we got home, except on Monday when she had something of a cold. We found everything here in a pretty good state (meaning family affairs).

As for my part, I am heels over head in politics and have no time to give you any news provided there was much going. In the course of a week or two I will write you again and will then have time to give you more news.

Our love to all the family and the friends generally.

Mrs. Mercy Akin  
Johnstown

Yours truly,  
Geo. Henry

**Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 27 June 1839**

New York 27 June 1839

Dear Mother,

Altho' I have nothing especial to write yet as I have an opportunity of sending without any expense and being very much at leisure, I will say to you that we are all well. John is yet at the head of his two classes. My machine will, in all probability, be done this week and then I hope to begin to earn something.

It is really getting to be a great task for me to sit down and write a lone letter except on business so you must not wonder at my brevity in this. Give our love to all the children and believe us to be

Very truly yours, etc.

Mrs. M. Akin

Geo. E. Freeman

[Note: I have concluded that this must be 1839. The machine status ties this letter to the next Freeman letter.]

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 25 September 1839

New York 25 Sept 1839

Dear Mother,

It is with much pleasure that I find myself able to say that at last I find my machine in a condition to operate. We have done but little yet with it, but enough has been done to settle the question of its utility. It is a good thing.

Hannah's health is, I regret to say, bad. She is certainly to have another – no matter – but we think it will happen soon. She seems very anxious that you should come down and if you cannot consistently, she would be very glad to have Mary come and spend the winter. For my part, I think both of you had better come. You can live cheaper and more pleasantly here than Johnstown. You know we have plenty of room to spare, and now on the next page, I will tell you why I particularly desire to have you here.

There are my motives. If you were to come and live with us, I could so fix it that you could hold my furniture in opposition to anybody else and this under any circumstances would be good security to you for 5 or 600 dollars towards what I owe you. None of my creditors have shown a disposition to molest me, but if they should, there is no way of keeping my furniture from them unless some other person has possession of it. You can, I am certain, live cheaper here than you now do. In making this proposal, I beg to assure you I have no motive, but to offer you some security for my indebtedness to you. I suggest the way that believe you might make yourself most comfortable at the smallest expense. Please remember us to the children. Let us hear from you.

Your son, etc.,

Mrs. Mercy Akin  
Johnstown

Geo. E. Freeman

[Note: I believe that the year of his letter is 1839. See previous Freeman letter. John is about finished with his machine in that one. It is working in this one. Hannah's health is reported as bad in this letter and it seems that Hannah is pregnant **again**.]

## Letter from Mary Akin to Mercy Akin dated 27 October 1839

New York, October 27, 1839

My Dear Mother & Brothers,

Last night I dreamed of home. I thought you was (sic) baking bread, pies, apples, and everything. I thought you had baked three barrels of bread and everything else in as large quantities. And then Peter Yost had a great deal to do in my dream. He was walking or riding past the house all night long. I guess he must have gone to the south. If he has, I know nothing of it. When you write, you must tell me, for I would like to know. It will be a great consolation to know that he has gone without troubling me. It has been my greatest trouble since I have been here. I was afraid he would call.

I suppose William Snider(?) has told you all about our journey here and how we all were. The family were, and are now, quite smart. Hannah is much smarter than I expected to find here though for two or three days in the last week, she was quite lame. But today, she can walk very well. She expects to be sick every day, but if she does not in a week or two, we shant be much surprised. If I do not come home in six weeks or so, you must not be surprised. I have found it full as pleasant as I expected although I have not been out any. But we live in a very pleasant place and you know I am no great hand to go very much. I have been once nearly to Canal Street – once to Mary Burdic[k] to tea. I have not been or heard anything of the Pollens though Ann told Hannah she and Lindy would be up in the course of a week or ten days. Mr Burdick has failed and what poor Mary will do is hard saying though she does not appear to take it very hard, I should think by what Freeman says. I have not seen her since.

Ethan, I am very sorry that I did not get some musick [music] and send by William, but the truth is after Monday, I did not see him until the next Sunday and I thought he had gone home but he could not find market for his mittens in New York and he thought he would try in Boston. As he did not come up as he had promised me, I thought he had gone home and therefore did not try to get it. But I shall get it soon. So if any chance occurs for me to send it, I shall. If you hear any new pices [pieces] that you like, I would be glad when you write to tell me the names for I would like to get enough to make a book and perhaps we shall never again get another opportunity.

I said that William did not call till the Sunday after he came from Boston, but he did the Thursday before and said he would come again if he could, but I did not think he would. I will tell you about our journey here and what a fool I was. When we arrived, he waited for me to get a carriage which I did and promised to pay the man one dollar as there was no one else going up. I thought I had better and have no more trouble. William said he could get a man to take my baggage for four shillings. Then, you know, it would cost me eight cents more and therefore I thought it was best to do as I did and accordingly got a carriage. William said he had plenty[plenty] of time to go with me, and I said I would be glad to have him. So when we got in, I thought it was my best time to pay him. I asked him how much it was. He told me 5 dollars and two shillings. He said he would not take anything for bringing me to the river and said they had charged me no more for my baggage than they would for his alone, and as it was put aboard[aboard] the steamboat baggage car, I guess it did not cost him more than a sixpence or shilling if it did anything. I gave him six dollars and since told him to take the change and said he must take three shillings for bringing me to the cars. He said he should not take one cent, but he would make change when we got to Freeman's. So I said no more and then when we got most there, I gave him one more dollar to pay the man. You see there would have been two shillings coming to me had he taken out three for coming to the river and one for my baggage, but do you believe he has never said one word. Never hinted the least thing about our coming although Freeman asked about our coming and its being expensive traveling, and I sent word by him, that you must send me money for my purse was very low. Wheather[Whether] he could not reason or wanted the money, I do not know, but I do know that it was very mean in him. Seven dollars out of my scanty purse has left me very

different. Much poorer than I like to be. If I should send in a week or to [two] for some money, you must not be surprised. Mother, I wish you would ask him in some way or other how it could cost me so much and see what he will say. Then if he should offer you the six shillings or even the two, take them and pay Ethan for those stockings I bought of him before I started from home. If he should offer you anything, tell him he must take pay for taking me to the river.

I have seen Peter McLaren and William Livingston. They called nearly a fortnight since. I forgot to introduce them to Freeman and whether they will call again or not, I cannot say. Tell Jane ??? she must not get George(?) entirely away from me, or that she must not take advantage of my absence. Tell her she must do as she would like to be done by. Tell Mary she may have John Wells if she wants him. If she can get him. Tell her if she does not get Dunk [Duncan] from Ruth, she is not the girl I think she is.

Give my love to all inquiring friends and tell John I am very sorry I cannot be at Johnstown while he is there. Tell him that I am learning to play chess and would like to play a game with him before he goes to Palmyra. Ethan, write soon and tell me all the news. Tell me if Duncan goes to see Ruth very often and what my prospects are there and above all, tell me when he will be here. How very happy I shall be to see him. Sylvanus, I suppose, is married. Tell me what reports Webb(?) made about me when he came home. Now Ethan, be particular and tell me all the news and pay the postage. Write soon, and believe me as ever, your dear daughter & sister.

Mary

Freeman and Hannah send their love and think the prospects are rather fairer than hitherto. His machine is working and he has as much work as he can do. Altogether, they live very nice. Much the same that they always have – not extravagant [extravagant], but very pleasant and comfortable. Tell Mercy(?) she must be a good girl. Study her book and keep herself nice and clean. She must take pains with her hair and not have it looking like a mop. She must be a good girl and help grandmother all she can – not shirk it all on her. It is not only helping Grandma, but herself also. She ought besides ironing her own clothes to iron the towels and all the small things. Mother, it is very probable that I shall send for money. You know I said I should get me a bonnet, but if I stay the winter, I do not think it will be worth the while for it is not likely I shall go out any and what is the use. I have not even been to church and my old straw will answer all my purposes, but I shall try and get some other things. How good home will seem if I ever get there again.

Ethan, if Mother should be taken sick, be sure and write immediately and if she should be very sick, send someone after me. You could send Frasure(?) or someone that I would not be afraid to come with. Because Hannah is so smart that we are in hopes she is not going to be very sick. I shall write as soon as it is all over with. Write me whether Ross brought any peaches and grapes and all the news about Caroline. Stewart has not been here but I hope I shall see him before I come home.

I remain as ever your affectionate sister,

Mary

## Letter from Caroline Ross to Mercy Akin dated 7 December 1839

Port Byron Saturday Dec 7, 1839

Dear Mother,

I have formed several times resolutions to write since I returned, but as often something would happen and prevent me. As I have at length commenced, I will try to give you a faithful History of matters and things as they have happened.

Firstly, our journey [journey] home was pleasant. Nothing happened to trouble us. The children were very good. They were not as much trouble on the cars as on the boats. I found all things well.

For one fortnight I was alone. It comes pretty tough to work, but I conured Mrs Fover Delurks (?) for a short time, but it seemed good to be little lazy and not to be obliged to get up until breakfast was ready. We got home Tuesday morning and Ann(?) Eliza stayed and done up the breakfast [breakfast] work and then went off and then a fortnight Gitty come and is here now. Seems to be more contented than she was before when she lived here. If you recollect, I told you she was to Eldreges [Eldridge's]. Well, Eliza and she had a falling out and but when they found that Gilly [Gitty?] had come here, they were very angry and would not let her have all her clothes. They have some yet.

We have been very busy since she [Gitty] come home. Cleaned house, made 30 pounds of candles. Tell Mercy I have finished the aprons. They look very well and among other things done to neumerous [numerous] to mention, I have skowerd [scoured] the old beaureau [bureau] and varnished them and trimed [trimmed] them that they look like annother [another] set.

Tuesday 10

You will perceive I adjourned from Saturday until today, Thursday. I had a severe, sick headache come on Saturday and it lasted till [until] Sunday knight [night]. We are all as well as usual. Hellen has had only the ?? thos(?) spell[s] of ringing since we come home, but in the place of them, she has, as near as I can recollect, almost such spells as Jane yoused [used] to have. The first we see of them, she looses the youse [loses the use] of her limbs. Seems to be dissy [dizzy] headed. They are not regulare [regular] fits. The Dr. calls them spasms. She has had four of them. The first she had, I was so frightened I could do nothing for her. I shook like a person that has a hard fit of the ague. Mrs Steele come over and give her some salt and water and we reched [retched] her with campher and she got better. Now the first thing is when we find she can't stand up is salt and watter and campher. That helps her. She is tothing too. She has four double teeth almost through. The Dr. thinks possibly it may be her teeth.

Cornelia grows finely. She recollects her visit to ya place. When ever she sees a blue shall [shawl], she wants to know if Aunt Mary is not coming. She often cries to see Aunt Mary. She fixes herself very often to go to school with Mary [or Mercy].

Mother, give my love to Mercy and is a good girl. Tell her her Father's family are well. I hope Mercy will try to help you all she can and study her book and try to improve the advantage of school. Poor Romeyn can't have the privilege of going to school. He works as steady as an old man. He has been home but once since I come home. Eliza told Gitty that if she could help it, he should not come again. I should like to see you, Mother, and have ya talk to Eldridge about Romeyn having the privelidge [privilege] of going to school. Mother, don't it seem hard that Armida should educate Eldridge and he can't as much give Romeyn a common school education. The excuse is the schools are not fit, but we can see with one eye half open the reason.

Mr. Dewitt, how do you do? I hope when I hear from ya to hear you have put off the foolish boys notions and taken in exchange a mind of good sence [sense] that will always direct in the way that is honourable [honorable]. And not till then, Dewitt need ya expect to make a steady man and a man of busyness [business]. I hope ya will try to please Farmer and do as he wants. Ya should remember, Dewitt, he will require more of ya than is right. I often wake up in the night and think of ya wishing ya may be protected from a thousand snares that lay open to you. Now, Dewitt, remember this advise [advice] is from a sister wishes ya good – no evil. Do not associate with bad boys. Do not have anything to do with them. Attend to your busyness [business] strictly after the store is shut up. Do not run round [around] nights with the boys. If ya do not feel like going to bed, take some good book and read.

Now, baby Ethan – I hope Anna has got well. I must give ya some good advise for I wish ya well fare. I think you had better chain your horse's feet when ya go down that long hill. It is getting rather slippry going. You might possibley run off in the dark some time.

Give my love to all inquiring friends. Yours as.

Caroline

Mother, have some one of you write to me. I want to hear from home very much. I would like to hear from Hannah. I have not heard from Mary yet. She promised to write. I have not heard from Jane neither. Let me know if ya are coming this winter.

Helen is not as fat as she was. She talks almost everything very plain. [This was written upside down on page 2 of the letter.]

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 28 January 1840

New York 28 Jan'y 1840

Dear Mother,

It becomes my painful duty to inform you of the death of our little infant. She died at about half past 6 o'clock on Friday morning and was buried on Saturday. You doubtless recollect that there was a constitutional difficulty about her heart. It was from that cause she died. This difficulty was in some measure promoted by a slight cold. She had been apparently very little unwell for some 4 or 5 days previously, but not so much as to excite any serious apprehensions until Thursday evening when at about 11 o'clock of a sudden she began to cry and nothing could pacify her. Mrs. Hardy came down stairs and we all concluded best to put her feet into warm water which we did, and gave her a teaspoonful of castor oil. All this did not seem essentially to relieve her. At about half past 12, I called a physician who advised putting her into a warm bath altogether which we repeated some 3 or 4 times before 4 o'clock. Each bath seeming in some measure to relieve her. After the last, she dropt asleep from which, it may be said, she never awoke. The other children together with Hannah and myself are well. Give our love to all the children.

Yours Resp'tfy,

Mrs. Mercy Akin

Geo. E. Freeman

[Note: I have concluded that George wrote 1839 when, in fact, it was 1840. Hannah has been going through a very bad pregnancy in which Mary had to come out and help out. Several letters from George in the Fall of 1839 talk about her poor health. Thus, this is the only thing that makes any sense to me. But! It is certainly open to criticism.]

**Letter from John Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 14 December 1844**

Sennett Decmr 14<sup>th</sup> 1844

Mrs. Akin, I have just received a line from you saying you have a judgement against me on which you must have the money by the first day of January. The few days afforded me to raise it is insufficient as it is altogether unexpected to me.

Nors I want to get along without having everybody know that the Sheriff is upon me for another amount. It will not only injure(?) me but his character also.

I want you now hold on for a month or two and I will try to raise it as soon as it would be on an execution.

You did not send me the amount of judgement. I wish you to send me what you will do about it and the amount of principle, interest and cost each one distinctly. And if it will do at your Bank in Johnstown.

M. Akin

Yours respect',

John Freeman

## Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 10 January 1845

Cleveland, O. 10 Jany 1845

Dear Mother,

On my arrival here I find a letter from Uncle John who says that he has just rec'd a letter from "Akin". I suppose he means Ethan saying that the matter against him is in judgement and that if it be not paid by 1<sup>st</sup> Jany\, execution will be issued. He also says that if this be done, his farm must be sold. Under these circumstances, he claims my interposition. Now I have to say that his farm must not be sold or he distressed if I can help it. When I was at Johnstown, you will recollect that I referred to this debt and said that I might have paid it before only for the purchase of my house and lot, but that in order to secure a shelter for my wife and children in case I should die suddenly, I had thought best to buy the house. I can say further that now within the next year, I can and will pay at least one half of this debt – perhaps all of it – if it be suffered to stand. But under any circumstances, I must protect my uncle from ruin and beg that you will, if the thing must be pressed to immediate pay't, let me know it and I will without delay put my house and lot up for sale and raise the amt. Of the debt. I hope to hear from you on this subject without delay that I may know what to expect and what course to pursue. Be good enough at the same time to send me a statement of the amt. of the debt.

On my way home, we were detained some 4 hours at Little Falls in consequence of which it was midnight when I passed Sennet and being very anxious to get home, I did not stop at Uncle John.

I have to say in conclusion that I got home safe and had the satisfaction to find my family all well.

Yours very truly

Geo. E. Freeman

## Letter from Mary Stuart to Mercy Akin dated 21 January 1845

Kent January 21, 1845

Dear Mother,

You must forgive me for not writing you before this (and Henry [1830 Connecticut census shows a Henry Stuart in Kent who may have been John L. Stuart's brother] for not answering his of the first inst) for I have so little time to write that when I do squeeze a little time, I think I must write to you, and then I want them all to remember that you never write so that I expect them to fulfill that obligation for you.

Since I heard that you and Dewitt were not well, I have been wanting to come home and stay a couple of days, but we have had such bad luck with the furnace blowing out that Stuart thinks he cannot afford it. The hearth stove failed the first of December. When they put in and other [another] and that failed in a fortnight. Now they have the third and this is failing although they have been running but three days, but that I cannot help, and I want to come and can't bear the thoughts of giving it up – for next summer, I cannot come, and I have given up all hopes of seeing any of our folks.

Ethan, I hear, has a new house and Susan a baby. Tell them I wish them joy of both. Stuart said when he came home last fall that it was Ethan's wishes that you should live with him, and Mother, let me ask you, "why not". He has a large house that you can have as much room as you want, and I am sure you can find as much to do as is necessary without the trouble of providing for a family. Another thing, Mother, it is too much work for you to take care of a house. I dreamed that you was going to try it the first of May, and I hope my dream will prove true. Then I have it all planned out for next summer. This is the plan. Stuart has bought a little shit house close to the depot. The house is not such a one as I would like, but then it is in a pleasant place and a good neighborhood (there is a saying in Johnstown that whoever marries an Akin will live in a large house, but it seems I am an exception). This house is about as large and [as] the one that James Wells moved in when he was first married, and something such a looking one. Bill Slawson says I always begin at the end of the story and so go backwards but as you say "ass-end foremost". But as small as my house is, I have a good large chamber for you and a room to sit in besides the kitchen. We shall move the first of April and get all things in readiness [readiness] to see you the first of June, and by then you will have time to move and get rested and [be] ready to spend the summer and fall with me. You won't get home sick this time. It is not more than twenty steps from the depot and is the most desirable place to live in Kent. The house is not like Susan's or Jane's, but then you all know what Stuart says, "a little wife well willed and a little house well filled" for him. And the only consolation I have in a little house is I shall have more time to look at the cars(?) when the stop.

Freeman, I suppose, made you a visit. He honored me very much not with a call but send [sent] word that they were all well. By what Henry wrote, I thought he would pass here Thursday or Friday. Thursday, we got the letter, and Friday we met the cars at the depot, but it seems that he went through on Monday following. Stuart was down on Monday and not two rods from him, but did not see him. It made me feel very bad to think that he would pass me three or four times, and I presume he saw me every time for I always go to the window when the passenger train passes. He paid me well for doing what I have for him and his family. He thinks, I suppose, it was nothing, but if any one would do the same for me, I would think they had done a good deal and be thankful. But then Freeman is not the only one that passes me me (sic), but then I am not going to have the blues about it. If they want to see me, [they] can come. If they do not then let them pass. I do not think it will shorten my years or days not an hour, and if you people at home could only take a peek at us once in awhile you would think so too. I don't go anywhere and don't have much company though Mrs. Glasson (?) comes regular once a fortnight and spends the afternoon or evening and Mrs. Edmond Mills comes occasionally though I have been nowhere only to

meeting twice since I came home. Yes, I have been to Bridgeport once, and I got all ready to go to New York and New Jersey with Stuart. After I got all ready and sat down to think about leaving Adelia [her daughter, Adelia, born abt. 1843], I gave it up, unpacked my clothes, and staid [stayed] home. I could not go away for a week or fortnight and leave her. I have been sorry since for I may never have the opportunity again. Tell Dewitt if he will come down this winter, we have got a first rate horse (Ethan's can't begin with it) and a sleigh that is a set of runners with a dry goods box nailed on for a cutter that we will ride half the time, sleep one quarter and eat the other quarter of the time and that instead of hear [here?], he may have Adelia to play and sleep(?) with or both if he chooses. Sis talks very plain though I don't think she can quite come up with Charly Ross yet, though she can shake the table cloth, split kindling wood, and make fire for me then and can do her hair up with a comb. That is a fact. Write immediately and let me know how you are get[ting] along.

Mary

Sis has not been very well for the last fortnight. Worms causes it. I brought away nine large ones. She was taken the same way that she was last summer when I was home and presume it was worms that ailed her then.

Have them write soon, Mother, and let me know how you are and if poor Dewitt has anymore fits, you may all know how I feel when I think of home - and it is not seldom that I think of you. Now, though, I try ever so hard not to. Come and stay with me next summer.

**Forbes & Sheldon Letter to Ethan Akin dated 16 Aug 1845**

Syracuse Aug 16<sup>th</sup> 1845

Mr. Ethan Akin

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 11<sup>th</sup> Aug 1845 has been rec'd . We have made the proper inquires & have become fully satisfied that the offer made by Hills is a fair one.

Indeed when it is considered in all its bearings, it is rated a high price.

The 40 feet lies in the leave(?) of the lot & runs back 132 feet. This leaves the store lot 132 front on the Main Street by 125 feet on the side street which leaves a large lot.

The barn cost originally about \$70 & the well about \$30. Calling these improvements \$100. The 40 feet sells at \$5 per foot front – which is, we think, a good price.

Hill says he has all his materials for putting up his house & commences next week.

We enclose contracts – one of which Mrs. Akin write/sign & return to us. The other she may retain.

Edward Akin is about to leave on to Illinois. He expects to leave September and says he will pay his bill before he goes. We suppose he will do so without doubt.

If Hills puts up a building, it may affect your Insurance and will probably require a notice to the Company.

Edward thinks that 100 feet of the front can be readily sold at \$500. If so, the store would not cost you over about \$450 and we learn that it cost \$2000.

Truly yours,

Forbes & Sheldon

## Letter from Caroline Ross to Mercy Akin dated 14 November 1845

Port Byron Nov 24, 1845

Dear Mother,

I hardly know how to excuse myself for not writing as I agreed. Otherwise, this press of business. I hav just finished my fall sewing and have quilted six quilts, one comfortable, and three skirts and some of the time been without a large girl. You will excuse me, I am sure.

We are all well now and have been most of the time since you was here two weeks ago. Louisi had an attacked of the intermittent force and the worms set in and for a few days she was quite sick but is almost well now. For myself, I can say [that] I have never been so smart as I am now. Occasionally, I have some pain in my side, but nothing in comparison to what I have had some times. I saw Mercy a few days ago. She is well. She and her Mother do their own work themselves and report says she has a ??an our academy teacher. I have not been able to learn the ???; however, I think Eliza is at the bottom of the plan to get her off. Word just came to me confidentially (not from Mercy but another source) that Mercy was opposed to but the Mother urged her to receive Mr. Green's addresses. All I have been able to get from mercy is her Mother does not say she must have him but says should Mr. Green propose any young lady would be a great fool not to accept him. The Father does not oppose. Mercy says there is not one word of truth in the report. She is not a-going to have him. It would be well for Dewitt to write and give her one word of caution. I think she is quite too young to think of getting married. She owned to me she thought her Mother took this course to have her take Mr. Green. She will not get her the last thing this winter. She says she does not need anything, but in pecunary point of view, I think she will not better herself. I understand he is a poor school teacher and as to his habits and character, I am a total stranger.

Romeyn was well when I heard from him last and was not home sick like well and his employer was well satisfied with him. Mrs. Pine had a run of flu fever – was quite sick three or four weeks – is now well. I have not heard one lisp or syllable from Johnstown since you was here. I have been very anxious to hear from Jane and have come to the conclusion that she must be alive yet or her death would have been published in the Republican. Now it is too outrageous that none of you ever write to me since Mary marriage. I have not had one letter from home. Elmore has had two or three business letters from Ethan and some of these contained three to five lines. If you knew how much pleasure a letter from any of my folks give me, you would, I know, write to me occasionally. Some of you – I have no choice in the writer – a line from any of you would would (sic) be gladly received and highly prized.

Mother, I promised you I would write immediately should Ross bid off the Tremper place. You have already heard my apology and I need say no more for not doing so. Elmore bid of the place the next Thursday after you left and has since been repairing it and our expectations are now to move there in or about three weeks. Presuming you would like to know what we have done and intend to do, I will try to edify you on the subject. Our intentions at first was to make very little alteration in the old house but put up an addition but on examination, the house was so much out of repair, it was necessary to do more. We have had the chimney taken down and slide doors between the rooms and as Ross says, "I have made the chambers almost into closepresses (?). I have looked well to that part. I have five presses. I know the want of such conveniences in this house of yours too well not to do so. We have builded an addition on the north side of a dining room, closets, kitchen, bedroom and woodhouse. The chamber room in the addition is three good sized bedrooms, two presses, a bathing room and a meal room and a narrow hall extending the whole length. Painting and papering besides a little plastering is all that remains yet to be done. The old well has been filled up and a new one has been dug and I expect the water will never fail us as they struck a running stream. They can see the water come in one side of the well and go out at the other. The last thing, but not the least that remain to be told, is I have an asparagus bed

and should I be permitted to live until next spring, won't I enjoy it. You know how fond I am of that vegetable.

You must write your orders concerning this house. Whether you would like to rent your house to one or to two families and should you have the price of or the management to Ross, he will do the best he can for you. There are but few families that rent that want so much room or want to pay very high rent. Write whether you will have two or one family occupy it. It is generally known that this house is either to sell or to rent and please give my love to all – Jane, George, Ethan, Susan, Dewitt and to all the inquirers and believe me as ever.

Caroline

**Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 17 December 1845**

Cleveland Dec 17/45

Mr. Dewit Akin

Dear brother,

When you were here, you will recollect I requested you to send me the amt of the judgt vs my Uncle and also to inform me up to what time the interest had been paid. This you have not yet done, but I hope you will on receipt of this. There is nothing new with us – we are all well, and going on very much after the old fashion. Give our love to Mother, Eathan's & Henry's families wishing them a Merry Christmas & a happy new year & believe me

Yours truly,

Geo. E. Freeman

**Letter from George Freeman to Mercy Akin dated 4 Feb 1846**

Cleveland Feby 4/46

Dear Mother,

I had not long since from DeWitt a letter stating the amt of the judg't against Uncle John at \$771.42 with a pay't of \$150. And I now send you a draft for the interest that has occurred since up to 1<sup>st</sup> Jan'y – as follows:

Amt of debt July 27/42	\$771.42
Pay't by Uncle John [on] Jan 1/45	\$150.
Of this sum, their was due at that time for interest	\$130.55
The balance of the \$150, I take from The original amt as so much paid on princ'.	<u>\$19.45</u>
	\$751.97

Upon this sum, I calculate the interest  
For one year and make it \$52.64 for which please  
Find draft.

As to our family, I have the pleasure to say that we are all well. And have been so generally since you were here.

If I could, I would say something about my future business, but just at this moment, it is rather uncertain what in may hereafter be. One thing is certain, that this winter closes my present system of business and for the future, the appearance now is very strong that I shall go to N.Y. in the Spring into a jobbing trade. Please remember us to all the friends and believe me

Very truly yours, etc.

Geo. E. Freeman

**Letter from T. Slocum to Mercy Akin dated 12 May 1846**

Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> May 1846

Dear Sister,

I now sit down to inform you of the melancholly [melancholy] news of the death of Johnathan Hoag's daughter, Elizabeth, who died this afternoon about four o'clock. She has been complaining ever since her confinement which was about 6 months ago. About 3 months ago, she came home and remained at home until her death. She has left a large circle of friends to mourn her untimely death. Ruth-Ann is also dangerously ill. Your friends are very anxious that you should attend the funeral which which [sic] will take place on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> at 10 o'clock in the morning. It is getting late and I must think of drawing to a close. Please give my love to Ethan & family and tell them we have felt very anxious to hear from them, but have not since they left Easton. Should like to have them visit us this summer. Our family are well and send a great deal of love to Aunt Mary. Royal is over to Johnathan's. He wants to see you ver much.

From your affectionate Sister,

Tubactt Slocum