

Potsdam, Oct. 7, 1860

Dear Father,

When I left you at Malone, I expected to see you again before this time, but some cases of typhoid fever have kept me at home. I have now six cases on my hands among whom is the lawyer Crary. One young lady, my patient, was buried today. All the others will get well. As soon as I can leave, I shall go to Ft. Covington.

If you can find it, I hope you will send me that form for a constitution for a medical society.

Horace Greeley's¹ speech here the evening after he was at Malone was a masterpiece – very superior to his Malone speech, showing that he is more a home I politics than in agriculture. He spoke in the window of the Town Hall to at least 2000 people who came from surrounding towns even as far away as Massena.

Doctor Sherman has covered himself with disgrace by an intimacy with a young lady. One of his letters was found on the young lady's table by a roommate who read it and copied it and showed the copy to others. I send you the paper with some quotations from the copy. The original letter had no name signed to it but the handwriting was so well known! Unfortunately the original has been destroyed, hence the printer dare not publish the whole and unqualifiedly I was doctoring a person in the house when the letter was found and heard the contents from one who read the letter. The first blank means Potsdam where the doctor spoke that evening. The R. means Russell; the E. Edwards, the Lou, Louisville where the doctor did speak. The lady's name is Beals. The letter said, "I send you five dollars. I wish I could multiply it by thousands." And a great deal more, even worse than that which is published.

This is a hard blow for the Doctor and will diminish his vote here and would defeat him did all know that it is true and not fabrication got up to injure him.

The Baptist minister's barn here, filled with hay and grain, was struck by lightning two weeks ago last Thursday. The whole was one mass of fire in one minute's time.

We are all well. I know of nothing more to write. I expect to hear from you soon.

Carroll

¹ **Horace Greeley** (February 3, 1811 – November 29, 1872) was an American newspaper editor, a founder of the Liberal Republican Party, a reformer, and a politician. His *New York Tribune* was America's most influential newspaper from the 1840s to the 1870s and "established Greeley's reputation as the greatest editor of his day."^[1] Greeley used it to promote the Whig and Republican parties, as well as opposition to slavery and a host of reforms ranging from vegetarianism to socialism.

Crusading against the corruption of Ulysses S. Grant's Republican administration, he was the new Liberal Republican Party's candidate in the 1872 U.S. presidential election. Despite having the additional support of the Democratic Party, he lost in a landslide. He is currently the only presidential candidate to have died prior to the counting of electoral votes. (Source: Wikipedia)

Election of Lincoln

Potsdam, November 10, 1860

Dear Father,

The evening after I wrote you that I should be at the Fort, it commenced raining and rained several days in succession and has rained nearly half the time since.

The apples have not come yet unless they came today.

... Now that election is over and Lincoln is elected, I hope the country will again become peaceful and quiet. A few rabid fanatics at the South like our rabid abolitionists will talk of seceding but no harm will be done. A new half-way-between party will spring up and the North and South will meet on more equitable terms than they would have done had any other than Lincoln been elected. We are all Republicans here and of course are much elated at the result of the election and last evening the victory was celebrated by the illumination, on no small scale, of our village.

I wish you could have been here. Every window of every store, whether Democratic or Republican and every office and of every Republican house on the mile square was brilliantly lighted. Every window and every light of glass in all of the hotels and both of the academies had a light in it – “Lincoln and Hamlin,” “Lincoln and Freedom,” “Hamlin and free speech,” “Poor Dug!” and many more like transparencies figures in the store windows. In the window of one Democrat’s store (the Democrats united more or less in the illumination, showing that a good feeling prevailed) – In the window of one Democrat was hung a very beautiful boat about three feet long freighted with little bags and boxes of provisions and five or six little kegs marked whiskey, Rum, Gin, Brand and Ale.” The sails were all set and on the flag was “We are bound up Salt River.” – The trees of dooryards were covered with colored lanterns of all colors and shapes. The Wide-Awakes with their torches and uniforms marched through every street headed by our brass band which was relieved by a military band of martial music. The Clarksons wee beautifully illuminated on the hill and gave the Wide-Awakes², about

² In 1856, the new Republican party across the North organized young men's marching clubs called "Rocky Mountain Clubs", "Wide Awakes", "Freedom Clubs", and "Bear Clubs" The term "Wide Awakes" became popular in the 1860 campaign. In Chicago on October 3, 1860, 10,000 Wide Awakes marched in a three-mile procession. The story of this rally occupied eight columns of the *Chicago Tribune*. In Indiana, as one historian reports, 1860 was the most colorful in the memory of the Hoosier electorate^[2]. "Speeches, day and night, torch-light processions, and all kinds of noise and confusion are the go, with all parties," commented the "independent" *Indianapolis Locomotive*. Congressman Julian too was impressed by the "contrivance and spectacular display" which prevailed in the current canvass. Each party took unusual pains to mobilize its followers in disciplined political clubs, but the most remarkable of these were the Lincoln "Rail Maulers" and "Wide Awakes," whose organizations extended throughout the state. Clad in gaudy uniforms the members of these quasi-military bands participated in all Republican demonstrations. The "Wide Awakes" in particular were well drilled and served as political police in escorting party speakers and in preserving order at public meetings. Party emulation made every political rally the occasion for carefully arranged parades through banner-bedecked streets, torchlight processions, elaborate floats and transparencies, blaring bands, and fireworks.

In 1860, the New York *Herald* estimated that there were over 400,000 drilled and uniformed Wide-awakes, nationwide. (Source Wikipedia)

sixty in number, an excellent supper. Two brass cannon, one a nine and one a six pounder kept up a continual thunder. The streets were thronged with people. The night was very dark and clear. The lights could be seen several miles from the village. The whole went off without accident or fight and was certainly the most imposing sight that I have ever witnessed.

But all is over now and instead of politics you hear of nothing but grease! Grease! Grease! – Greased carpets, greased windows, greased chairs, grease upstairs and downstairs! Great all over the house!

Do not think that I am too much engaged in politics. I have said very little about it.

Balloon Ascension

We had a balloon ascension here the 24th of October [1860]. La Mountain³ who sailed from St. Louis to Adams, Jefferson County, eleven hundred and fifty miles in nineteen hours and who was lost in the Canada forest so many days. The balloon Atlantic which is about as large as your office-bedroom, was filled with hydrogen gas manufactured on the spot in two very large cisterns – as large again as your cistern. The gas was generated from water poured upon several hundred quarts of sulphuric acid and a ton or so of iron scraps. It was conveyed through a cask of cool water to condense all vapor and cool the gas, and thence into the balloon. Perhaps this drawing (which Charlotte says doesn't

³ John La Mountain, 1830 – 1878, He had but little education, and on the early death of his father he became the sole support of his mother. When a young man he was successful in making several minor ascensions. He then formed the idea of making a longer voyage than any on record, and constructed a large balloon of silk, having an approximate capacity of 70,000 cubic feet (2,000 m³), which he named “The Atlantic.” The ascent was made from [St. Louis, Missouri](#), on 1 July 1859, and several passengers, including [John Wise](#), accompanied him. The states of [Illinois](#) and [Indiana](#) were passed over during the night, and [Ohio](#) was reached in the morning. The balloon then passed across [Lake Erie](#) into [New York](#), and to [Lake Ontario](#), into which it descended, but rose again, and a landing was made in [Henderson, New York](#). The time occupied in making this journey was nineteen hours and fifty minutes, and the distance traversed 1,150 miles (1,850 km), or 826 in a straight line. This great aerial voyage was planned and executed by La Mountain alone, although the credit for it has been claimed by others.

In September 1859, La Mountain made an ascension from [Watertown, New York](#), which was remarkable on account of his perilous experience. The ascension was made when the temperature was 84° F., but on reaching a height of 3½ miles it had sunk to 18° F. As night came on, the balloon was over the [Canadian](#) wilderness, and a partial descent was made to “tie up” till daylight came, when he again proceeded in a northerly direction. Unwilling to continue farther, he descended during the day, and wandered in the wilderness for four days, without adequate food or clothing, until rescued by lumbermen 150 miles (240 km) north of [Ottawa](#), and 300 miles (480 km) from Watertown.

In 1862 he was appointed [aeronautic engineer](#) to the [Army of the Potomac](#), under [Thaddeus S. C. Lowe](#) and in that capacity made several ascensions; owing to lack of cordiality between himself and Lowe, he soon severed his connection with the army. Subsequently he made occasional ascensions, but none of importance.

show that I ever took lessons in drawing will give you an idea of the process. [The last sentence is accompanied by a sketch at the side [Note: No sketch was found in the copies from which these letters were taken]. La Mountain commenced filling the balloon at about eleven o'clock and at three and a half it was a full as necessary. Attached to the balloon was a basket shaped like a very large peach-basket about three feet wide and two and a half across the top. This basket was hung below by a lot of small cords about as large as a clothes-line which covered the balloon in a net just as the picture represents, the ends passing about four feet below the balloon and tied to it. At twenty minutes before four o'clock p.m. La Mountain took his place in this simple, frail basket and a lot of men holding on by a cord, let him up ten feet until his daguerreotype could be taken. What a gloomy feeling weighed upon the hundreds of souls about him. What sad countenances all about him were as about to bid an everlasting farewell to an earthly friend! Yet La Mountain stands there as unmindful of all about him, showing no more concern than if about to take a sail in a boat!

All is ready! Stand back! Let go! Oh, how beautifully he rises! All for a moment is as still as death until he is seen way up there to jump upon the side of the basket and swing his hat in triumph. Then the crowd below burst forth in a long continued "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!!" I need not say that the sight was beautiful, was wonderful, causing strange feelings that cannot be described. He sailed 30 minutes all the time in our sight and landed about ten miles, air-line, one and a half miles from Brasher Falls Depot. The day was clear, not a cloud to be seen. He went up about two miles.

Thursday a.m.

I have been in Stockholm 36 hours to see a sick woman. We are well. There is not much sickness and I am not very busy. Could go home were the roads passable. Louisa McCrea was married two weeks ago today. Has done well. I have been trying experiments with arsenic on cats. Gave 1 ½ grs. In six days in ½ gr. Doses. Detected arsenic in the muscles of the hind legs. Tried many tests. Have symptoms and tests all written down. I poisoned two kittens two months old. Have you found that form for a medical society constitution? I have just been at the Depot. The apples have not come. Perhaps you had better write when you send them so that I may hunt them up if they should stop at the Junction.

Carroll