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Caleb Carr. Letters, 1856-1867.

Guide
Carr, Caleb, Letters, 1856-1867.
53 items.

Summary: Letters written to Caleb and Emily Pierce Carr of Hillsboro, Wisconsin, from family members in Genoa, Locke, and Elmira, New York. Subjects include family and local news, farm conditions, politics, temperance, spiritualism, the Panic of 1857, and homefront reactions to the Civil War. Also 13 letters to Carr from Henry Queripel, Jr. of New York City, mostly concerning his farm property in Wisconsin, but also commenting on commodity prices and trading conditions, religion, a smallpox epidemic in New York, and the Civil War.

Indexes: Item list.
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Forty letters addressed to Caleb and Emily Pierce Carr and other members of their family, former Cayuga County residents who moved to Hillsboro, Wisconsin, in the mid-1850's; written from Locke, Genoa, and Elmira by the couple's parents, Isaac and Lucy Carr and R. E. and Amnis Pierce, and various relatives, this correspondence deals with family health and finances, local news, weather conditions, crop and livestock prices, politics, temperance, spiritualism, scarcity of money following the Panic of 1857, and homefront reactions to the Civil War. Also included is a series of thirteen letters (1864-1867) to Carr from Henry Queripel, Jr. of New York City, which are primarily concerned with the maintenance and disposition of his farm property in Wisconsin, but also contain comments on commodity prices and trading conditions, religion, a smallpox epidemic in New York, and certain aspects of the Civil War as viewed by a civilian. Calendar available on request.

Card entry:
Carr, Caleb. Letters, 1856-1867; 59 pcs.

Cross references to main entry:
Pierce Family (Cayuga County)
Queripel, Henry Jr.
Civil War (reactions to)
Elmira (Chemung County)
Genoa (Cayuga County)
Locke (Cayuga County)
Wisconsin (Hillsboro)
Epidemics (smallpox)
Prices (1850's-1860's)
Spiritualism
Temperance
Caleb M. Carr Letters

Sender: Isaac T. Carr (father) - Genoa, Cayuga Co., New York
Recipient: Carr children (Caleb & Emily Carr) & Carr grandchildren (Mariette)
           Newton [TN] Carr - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: September 21, 1856
Subject: Parents are worried about their children (Caleb & Emily and children) who need financial help. Parents say they hope to sell their farm soon to get money to help. Parents are anxious to know more about the children's farm in Wisconsin.

Sender: Amnis Pierce - mother - Locke, New York
Recipient: Caleb & Emily Pierce Carr & Daniel and Rosena Pierce - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: November 6, 1856 (?)
Subject: Amnis is sorry Emily's little daughter Emma died, as a result of the hard journey from New York to Wisconsin. She misses Emily's other children, Mariet and Newton. Lucia (Emily's sister) and her father have been sick. Amanda, another sister, has a three week old baby. Amnis asks Emily to advise her brother, Daniel, (also in Wisconsin) to spend his money wisely.

Sender: Isaac T. Carr - Genoa, New York
Recipient: Carr children - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: December 14, 1856
Subject: Reference to a Carr daughter, Jane, living at home, who will go to school in Elmira. Reference to price of horses and crops.

Sender: Isaac T. Carr - Genoa, New York
Recipient: Carr children - Wisconsin
Date: January 18 & 24, 1857
Subject: Reference to a son, Nelson, living with parents, who "has had an agency sent to him from New Hampshire to sell lottery tickets." Cold snowy winter in Genoa.

Sender: Isaac T. Carr - Genoa, New York
Recipient: unknown
Date: January - March, 1857 (?)
Subject: Isaac is considering trading his farm for land with Mr. Withy. Isaac requests information about this land.

*Now Hillsboro, not Hillsborough.
R. E. and Amnis Pierce - parents - Locke, New York
Caleb and Emily Pierce Carr; Daniel and Rosena Pierce - Wisconsin woods

March 7, 1857

Subject: R. E. and Amnis went to see Amanda. Her baby has been sick. Amanda's other girls, Ina and Lucia, both go to school. They sing at school. Amnis wishes that Caleb and Emily's children, Mariett and Newton, could sing with them. Amnis misses her children in Wisconsin. She says "I never meant my children should be scattered round." R. E. is well. She says "We all need a great deal more religion." There is quite a shift in property in Milan. There's going to be a gristmill in Milan. Amnis cautions Daniel not to be foolhardy with his money.

R. E. advises that all the children--Caleb and Emily, Daniel and Rosena--travel together and help each other build houses. R. E. had a talk with Isaac Carr and together they are sending $150 to help the children in Wisconsin. R. E. by himself is sending Daniel $200.

Isaac T. Carr - Genoa, New York
Carr children - Wisconsin

March 22, 1857

Subject: Isaac says he is glad to hear that the children received their money, were in good spirits, and intended to get on their farm as soon as they can. Isaac says he will move April 1 to Locke. Isaac cites the prices of horses and cows he has sold.

Isaac T. Carr - Locke, New York
Carr children - Hillsborough, Wisconsin

April 5, 1857

Subject: Isaac hasn't moved yet because of a big bluster. He is sorry to hear that his children could not get on their farm this spring. He says he is sorry he sent them money so early. He says "We have got our property in a shape that we can realize but little from it but the interest." Isaac is going to Pennsylvania to teach school for the summer at $2.00 per day and board. Isaac chastizes his children for indulging in spiritualism ("such folly"). There is news of marriages and families who have moved from Milan. Enclosed is a recipe for hot drops - to prevent dysentery.

Lucy Carr - mother - Locke, New York
Carr children - Hillsborough, Wisconsin

April 12, 1857

Subject: Lucy is lonely for her children. She and Isaac are unwell, as is Nelson. Nelson evidently went west with the others, but returned because of his health. Lucy says to the children in Wisconsin, "I was in hopes you would think best to come back but now I have no hope hope is departed and I am left to Grieve A lone." She thinks that Isaac will go to Wisconsin in the fall, or maybe he'll buy a farm in Pennsylvania.
Bad weather to start crops in Locke. Nelson has headaches. Isaac misses his children and grandchildren.

Isaac's wife, Lucy, is ill. She is worried about her children in Wisconsin and misses Jane. Isaac says he has heard that the children have started a shanty on their soil and he plies them with questions about their land. He wants to know whether the land between the children and the village is in the hands of speculators or is likely to be settled soon, and how far the children are from the land office. Isaac writes that there are three stores in Milan (which is apparently near Locke). Jane has her teaching certificate and is still away from home. The hay is $12 per ton and is mostly gone, so cattle are starving.

Lucy is lonely for her children in Wisconsin and Jane. She and Isaac don't intend to stay in Locke any longer than they can help. She wants to know if there are Indians in Wisconsin. She says in Locke "the ladies dresis is so long they drag on the ground an inch or two."

Mother's (Isaac's wife's) health is poor and Nelson is away with their stud horse, so they're often lonely. The spring has been "backward," so grain is expensive, as is food, in general. Prices are cited. Isaac hopes to sell some of his garden vegetables. He says he doesn't think Nelson would be much help to the other children if he went to Wisconsin, as Nelson is little help to Isaac. Isaac asks if Daniel (Pierce) lives in the same shanty with Caleb, Emily and family.

Isaac says he has received a letter from the children and is glad to
hear that they have planted corn and potatoes. "Jane gets along in her school first rate." Mother's health is better. Wednesday night (June 17) there was a flood. Several dams gave ways and several lives were lost in the regions of Groton, Owego, and Ithaca.

Nelson writes that he has just visited the Pierces (who are the parents of Caleb's wife) and the Pierces gave him $50 to send to Wisconsin to Caleb and the others. Nelson adds "We will send you $100." Nelson chastizes Caleb for writing bad news and tells him not to write at all if he won't write good news, "for the last letter you wrought, it made mother and father sick and it is the last money that I shall consent to send to you..."

Isaac adds to Nelson's letter: "You must not mind what Nelson has written he hates to see us feel bad..." Isaac hopes to see the children in Wisconsin this fall.

Lucy says she wishes the children would come home. Isaac can't go to visit them this fall after all, because he won't have enough money, after he has sent money to the children. Lucy complains that she and Isaac have no luxuries - they cannot work and can't go to meeting for want of clothes nor anywhere for want of a wagon. She says she dares not go to Wisconsin because she fears for her health.

Isaac writes that he feels very bad to think the children are so far from him that he can help them in no way but money. As it is, he is running out of money, so he must borrow $100 to send the children, and he cannot raise enough to come to visit his children this fall. He advises the children to come home if they cannot get along on the $100 he has borrowed.

Isaac relates gossip: Last winter a Dr. Burdell of New York City was murdered. When Miss Cunningham was taken up for the murder, she said she was married to Burdell and they released her.
Mother is happier since Jane is back home. Fruit is scarce, and the crops are late and poor this year.

There is a continual failure in banks. Crops are coming well and the price is coming down for everything except potatoes. Isaac wishes he could come to Wisconsin this fall. He'd prefer working for the children to idleness.

It is the hardest time Isaac has ever seen for money. All of the banks have stopped discounting and most of them have suspended payments, and a great many have failed entirely. Isaac says he can't get a dollar of the money he borrowed (for the children) and promised to repay by October 1. "There is the greatest panic just now you ever new." "I feel glad that I have sold out as near as I have and wish I could sell the rest..." Crops are good.

Local gossip. Comments about the family's health. Concern over the children in Wisconsin when winter comes. Jane writes Mariett ("Met") that she might teach in Genoa. She also writes about dress materials.

Gossip about trouble between Robert E. Pierce and John Edsall, who both claim the same "yearling heifer." Gossip about a man who set another man's barn on fire. Next Tuesday (November 3) is an election. The Democrats and the Know Nothings have united. Isaac thinks they will elect all of their ticket, but he hopes not.
Isaac gives Mariett medical advice. He tells his children to try to find a piece of land in Wisconsin for Isaac to move to (with his wife and Nelson). Isaac gives the price of crops.

Isaac tells of a hung jury on the heifer disagreement. He asks his children's advice about coming to join them. He doesn't know if he should bring his goods with him or trade them beforehand. Isaac writes that he's sending his children enough money to pay their taxes.

Jane is teaching in Groton. Weather news.

Isaac has borrowed more money to send to the children. He asks his children to try to get along with Daniel, their only neighbor, who is the son of Isaac's friends, the Pierces. (Isaac's son, Caleb, is married to the Pierce's daughter, Emily).

Weather, health, and crop comments. Isaac has little money, having sent the children tax money. He has only one pig to last all winter.

The heifer trial was settled, with both men paying half the cost of the heifer. Weather news. Cold and snowy. Food prices are still low, so farmers are discontent.
Concern for children. She misses them.

Isaac's wife has been "troubled with the palpitation." From this letter it becomes apparent that Mariett and I. T. N. are children - probably Caleb's

"I wish you had never went away." Lucy is ill. She has the palpitation.

Isaac asks his children's advice on what to do. His friends advise him that he should not go to Wisconsin at his age, but he's very lonely without his children.

Weather news.

Isaac is very lonely and confused. He and his wife, Lucy, had decided to re-buy their old farm, instead of going to Wisconsin because of their ill health and old age. Unfortunately, Lucy is terribly discontent with the old farm. Jane has been sick.

Isaac is discouraged because prices are high and his children haven't written. He says that Milan is just as scandalous as ever. He is running out of money, and he wishes the children would come home.
Sender: Amnis Pierce - Locke, New York
Recipient: Emily Pierce Carr (Amnis' daughter), Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: November, 1862
Subject: R. E., Amnis' husband has "not dressed nor undressed himself in four months." Amnis is weary and low on money. It is apparent that Mrs. Lucy Carr has been to Wisconsin and has returned. Amnis says, "Mrs. Carr has been here with a long yarn she said she had heard since she come back that you had told me grievous things and I had told it here I told her that you had never wrote any such thing. . . The war as you know takes the place of everything else in the mind. There has not been any one killed that went from here---and but two or three have died. The day has passed for drafting everyone. . . and some have paid large sums of money to the doctors to get clear and have lost their money."

Sender: Henry Queripel Jr., 266 Spring St., New York
Recipient: Caleb M. Carr - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: June 13, 1864
Subject: Queripel replies to a letter from Caleb Carr which evidently renewed a long forgotten friendship. It seems that Queripel formerly had a farm in Wisconsin near Caleb's, but misfortune befell him and he was forced to leave his farm and go to New York City, leaving a man named Burris to sell the farm produce (worth $500, according to Queripel), pay his creditors a total of $80, and send the remaining money to Queripel in New York City. In this letter Queripel expresses his fury at Burris who had written him that he (Burris) did not have enough money left after paying Queripel's creditors to pay the taxes on the Queripel farm. Since Queripel found it impossible to go back to Wisconsin and check on Burris, whose honesty he doubts, he asks Caleb Carr, in this letter, to act as his agent, for a fee, and investigate the matter. Queripel also asks Caleb to estimate how much the farm is worth, so that he can ask a good price for it. In this letter there is much romantic talk about the glories of fighting for one's country. Queripel criticizes Lincoln and says if Johnson were Commander-in-Chief, the war would have ended long ago.

Sender: Henry Queripel Jr., 266 Spring Street, New York City
Recipient: Caleb Carr - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: July 7, 1864
Subject: Queripel expresses anger at certain Hillsborough soldiers Caleb had written about, who obtained discharges from the army by intentionally getting the "Rheumatics" by overeating and by bribing doctors. Says Queripel: "These very fellows loud and boisterous in their declamations against me as a heretic and secessionist . . . went off to the war with colors flying, heads and tail feathers up come back to us with heads bowed down and tail feather dragging in the dust." "They are what you might call legal deserters, aiders and abetors of the rebellion . . ."
There is much talk about bills, affidavits, certificates, and depositions for Henry's farm. Henry tells Caleb to sell his old house to best advantage. Henry also inquires about the United Brethren Church and its new converts. Says he, "I don't know but what I may preach a sermon on Hills Prairie yet!" About New York City, he says, "the city is an hospital full of small pox and they are dying on the right hand and on the left."

Instructions on what Caleb should do to help Quipel straighten his farm feud with Burris. Quipel's nostalgia for Hillsborough and his farm. Quipel elaborates on his trade scheme between New York City goods to Hillsborough people at a high price. Such things as "books, machines, medicines, and seed of all kinds" were suggested as good items to sell in Hillsborough.

"Cuba's sugar is worth for common 20 to 26
Havana White 28 to 30
Porto Rico 21 to 27

Teas
Hysen 1.25 to 1.75
Young Hysen (mixed) 1.00 to 2.00
Oolong 1.25 to 2.00

Quipel expresses his distress because Burris is keeping what belongs to Quipel, and because he is so hard up for money. He writes of Burris, "What is worse than all is to be bitten by a cur who had eat, drank, and reveled at my trough." Quipel counsels Caleb to sell the wheat grain and hay "so as to pay the threshers taxes."
Quiipel tells Carr that some of Hillsborough's products would find a good market in New York City: "A splendid thing might have been done on Ginseng root and Seneca snake root, Lobelia herb, catnip, wild turnip, etc. . . You could have bought it at your place for about 30 to 40 cents dry and it sold readily here for 80 cents to $1.00 per lb. . . " About selling his farm Quiipel says, "We refused not long ago an offer of $3000 and asked $3500 for it and I think it to be fully worth that if anything at all. . . "

Sender: Henry Quipel
Recipient: Caleb Carr - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: August 2, 1865
Subject: Quiipel asks Caleb if he agrees that Quiipel should sell his land "to an advantage if it could be done. . . "

Henry says, "Money is the God of the present generation. . . "

Sender: Henry Quipel Jr.
Recipient: Caleb M. Carr - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: between December 1864 and August 1865
Subject: Henry is now secretary of a large stock company--capital $500,000. He is also forming another stock company with a capital of $200,000. Henry says, "Money is the God of the present generation. . . "

Sender: Henry Quipel Jr.
Recipient: Caleb M. Carr - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: August 29, 1865
Subject: Henry writes Caleb that "it is best to rotate the crops for instance follow wheat with oats and then with Buckwheat to be turned under then with corn." "This course of treating your ground with buckwheat will surely clear it from Chince bugs. . . as well as refresh the soil. . . " Henry thinks that he'll sell his land to his father for $3000 - $1000 cash "and the balance could remain upon mortgage."
On the other hand, Henry would like to go back to Hillsborough, since he's sentimentally attached to the land and the people there. Henry is glad because the boys (Caleb's sons) have all returned from the war alive. He then gets carried away with the glories of dying for one's country: "Glorious death. . . Happy death. . . Precious Blood! the cement that hold our union more firmly together."

Sender: Henry Quipel Jr.
Recipient: Caleb M. Carr - Hillsborough, Wisconsin
Date: January 16, 1866
Subject: Henry has received a bill of particulars from Caleb showing what debts Caleb has paid. Henry is astonished that Burris misled him into thinking that he (Burris) had paid all Henry's debts, when some of them were really left unpaid. Henry is afraid that Burris' negligence has tarnished Henry's "character for honesty and uprightness."
Henry acknowledges the receipt of a U. S. Bond for $50, and the receipt for taxes. He inquires about his fences, apple trees, etc. and says he is glad that his neighbors still hold him "in estimation." Henry hopes to be able to visit Hillsborough this fall.

There is talk of selling a piece of Henry's land on which to build a schoolhouse.

She says "Newton and John are still in California. Caleb (probably not Caleb Carr) has been in the army. . ." In Elmira, "flour is $16 per barrel, it has raised $3 in a month. Butter has been 55 and 60 cts per pound, now it is about 35. Eggs has been. . . 20 cts per dozen." Apparently Caleb has two other children besides Mariett and Newton, whose names are Isaac (probably the same child as ITN) and Harry.

Henry inquires about the state of his property and crops, and asks if his taxes have been paid.

Amanda says her girl Ina is as large as Mariett was when she was in Genoa (in 1856). Father (R. E. Pierce) enjoys good health, as does Mother (Amnis). Amanda has children named Emma and Annie, as well as Lucia and Ina. Amanda writes of the Civil War: "I feel jubilant over the success of our arms the past week in the west capturing those forts in Tennessee and Price and his army but every joy is accompanied with sadness when we remember what a sacrifice of human life it has cost." It is apparent from this letter that Mariett has died. Wartime prices are cited.

* Supposedly Sterling Price.
Lydia Munson - Elmira, New York
Caleb Carr (?) - addressed to nephew and niece
Probably after 1866

Jane's little boy drowned at the age of 3. "A great temperance wave has passed over Elmira many hard-drinking men have been converted. . . "
"Nelson was here over 2 weeks last winter his sons are men. . . "

59 MSS. sheets inv., 7/64. In 2" box in stacks. -- ND

Prepared by K. Illencsik, Summer '64.
GENEALOGY

Carr:

Isaac T. Carr, 1796-1858 m. Lucy (?) .

1. (Horatio) Nelson Carr 2. Caleb Carr m. Emily Pierce* 3. Jane m. (?) (Jane a teacher in Groton and elsewhere prior to marriage.)


Letters also from a Lydia Munson of Elmira, probably Caleb's aunt.

Pierce:

R. E. Pierce m. Amnis (?) .

1. Emily m. Caleb Carr* - 2. Daniel m. Rosena (?) 3. Lucy (Lucia) 4. Amanda m. (?) Ferris

(went to Wisconsin)

Children, as above.

1. Ina 2. Lucia 3. Emma 4. Annie

NOTE: This chart not necessarily complete. Is based on content of letters.