

SOME OLD LETTERS
RELATING TO EARLY STOCKBRIDGE

1749 - 1754

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RELATING TO EARLY STOCKBRIDGE



THE following letters were written by Ephraim Williams to his youngest son, Elijah, between the 16th day of January, 1749, O.S., and the 30th day of March, 1754.

They were found by me recently in a chest containing papers of the last century, in an old family garret where they had been lying entirely undisturbed since 1837; having been at that time removed from a still older family garret.

They were in a state of perfect preservation, folded as originally sent and received, each indorsed "Col. E. Williams" in the handwriting of the recipient, and snugly tied up together with a buckskin thong. Owing to not having been much handled there were no worn edges or folds, and the ink was quite black, though the paper was yellow with age.

They are neither political, gossipy, nor autobiographic, as so many published collections have been. Written by a plain New England puritan farmer, to his son—a student in Princeton College—they are published as some indication of the simple, monotonous life of those days; days when was being laid the foundation of character and of communities which have produced such results in our magnificent empire.

Ephraim Williams, the writer, was descended from Robert Williams, who early immigrated from England and settled in Roxbury, Massachusetts Bay Province. The family is a well-known one in New England. The branch so distinguished in Deerfield history is from this ancestor; as was William Williams of Connecticut, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Under Jonathan Belcher, provincial governor of Massachusetts, an Indian and

Mission School was established in the western part of the territory lying next the Dutch settlements on the Hudson River. John Serjeant, tutor in Yale College, went as teacher and pastor among these aborigines (continuing as such until his death there in 1749); and Ephraim Williams was one of those sent by the Government—under treaty with the Indians—to reside among them, to anglicize and civilize, and to teach agriculture. This latter removed with his family from Newton (which his father had helped to settle, and where he himself was born in 1691) to Stockbridge in 1737.

Stockbridge communicated in those days with the rest of the world only by trails to the Connecticut and Hudson valleys; and its isolation is well described in the words of a map then indicating its location—"a wilderness of forty miles on the east, a wood of twenty miles on the west, and a great and terrible wilderness on the north of several hundred miles in extent which reached to Canada."

It was through this forest on the north that the French and their Indian allies came to harry the English settlements; settlements then feebly protected by a chain of rude frontier forts lying along the line of the Hoosack River and valley. These forts were commanded by Colonel Ephraim Williams—eldest son of this writer; the same who founded Williams College, and who led the Massachusetts troops in the Johnson Expedition against Crown Point in 1755, and was killed in the fight with Dieskau at the head of Lake George.

In this remote spot the writer lived and labored till failing strength unfitted him for active work; then he removed to the more settled Connecticut Valley, where one of his sons was a practising physician, and died at Deerfield in 1754.

He had baptized his children Ephraim, Thomas, Abigail, Josiah, Judith, Elizabeth, and Elijah; from which may be indicated his religious tendencies—so much more markedly shown in the tone of these letters. His eldest daughter, Abigail, became the wife of the missionary John Sergeant; and after his death she married Brigadier-General Joseph Dwight, distinguished alike in the military and judicial history of the colony. From this daughter have descended noted families of Western Massachusetts.

The son Elijah—(Benjamin of the flock), to whom these letters were written, had been sent to the recently established Princeton College, where he pursued his course under President Aaron Burr (then at Newark), whither most of these letters were sent. After graduation he returned to Stockbridge, engaged extensively in farming, mining, and milling. He established the iron works at West Stockbridge, and opened the first marble quarries there; was one of the original proprietors in the settlement of Lenox and Richmond; became a prominent citizen of Berkshire County, and died there in 1815 aged eighty-two.

I can only surmise what influence these letters had in forming the character of the young Elijah; possibly not more than fathers' letters usually have on collegiate sons. My impression is—based upon many contemporaneous papers—that he was of strong and sturdy character, and of great executive ability. It appears that at times

he had conflicts with the church (of which Jonathan Edwards had been minister), in attempts toward his religious discipline; also that he was arrested and imprisoned at Boston, during the Revolution, for alleged complicity in a tory plot. In both which matters he came off victor.

These letters—whose religious formulas suggest the hebraistic thoughts of the writer—were sent as occasion permitted; many times through the forest to the Hudson River, where "Capt funda" took them in his sloop to New York and left them with "Mr. Buckee at Whitehall" to be forwarded as opportunity was had. I judge by comparison of dates that one month was not an unusual time for correspondence.

The remarkable spelling speaks for itself. It is variable (to say the least), after the manner of even educated people in those days; and quite uncertain, save in its phonetic character. As to the punctuation, that is reasonably past reproduction. Periods, commas, colons, dots, dashes, and other marks are so rife and so irregular in use that I have given up all idea of correctly exhibiting them (save in a few instances where the original is preserved in order to show the unique style) and have generally left only what I thought would best convey the ideas of the writer.

The reader will therefore please follow the instructions of Lord Timothy Dexter, and imagine some pages of punctuation marks to follow, then—"pepper to suit yourself."

JAMES F. DWIGHT.

I
To
M^R. ELIJAH WILLIAMS
IN
NEW-ARK
AT MR PRESIDENT BURR^S—
STOCKBRIDGE JAN^V 16-1749

DEAR CHILD

I have been from home ever since the 13th of nov^{br} last, returned last friday evening; a long and very expensive Jor-

ney to Boston indeed, but have got Stockbridge affairs pretty well Settled: and expected to have heard from you on my arrival at home, but have not to my great Surprise: hop^t you woold have embract all oppertunities to have let us heard from you and of your circumstances: &c

I hope you will not fail to write by your Brother: and also to improve all other oppertunities to let us know how you are and whether you make good proficiency or not: I am well pleas^d at your compli-

ance in going to New-ark since my going to Cambridge, and am told that I have acted the most prudent part, even by the best Judges.

M^r Billings and Mad^m send their Love to you & he intends to come & see you next Commencement; you must therefore know of the Pressident when & where it will be, & let me know as soon as you can. I hope you will wisely Redeem & improve time, for both your Temporal & Spiritual advantages, for time goes on Swift wings and once lost can never be recoverd: and among other things I earnestly desire you to take pains to learn to Sing, that you may on all ocations awake your Glory to praise God &c—Cary respectfully to all, and especially pay the most dutifull regards to the Rev^d President and let him partake in all offices of love & Service; this will win his love and ingage him in all possible acts of friendship to you; and indeavor to win the love of boath tutors and all fellow Pupills. but above all get and keep in good terms with God & daily renew the dedication of your Selfe to be for him and him alone. let Secret Prayer be your constant practice and great delight and may a gracious God, here, accept, and Bless you. I could get no money to send you but hope to do it early in the Spring. your mother sisters and friends Joyn with me in sending kind love to you these from your affectionate father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

II

STOCKBRIDGE March 15 1749 | 50

DEAR CHILD

I write principally to let you know of my Indisposition, having been confind ever since I came from Boston; and now Scarce able to set up and write these few lines: am full of Paternal Concern for your wellfare and best good. Intreet and advise and charge you to improve your time to the best advantage for Body & Soul. now is your day to work in, dont neglect it. time is flying on Swift wings and the past hour can never be recald: be diligent in your Studyes and I pray God bless and smile

on you in them & give you abblity to make a Laudable proficiency in learning: endeavor to Excell, cobby after the best patterns: endeavor by your Courteous Carriage and dutifull behaviour to win the affections of all about you in and according to the Severall relations in which they stand; especially let the worthy Pressident have all possible Respectfull Regards paid him, and be allways ready to apply to him for Instruction and advice, and thankfull for all you receive: that will Ingage his affections and. ready assistance which will be of great Service. one word in your favour from him may be by and by of vast and unknown Service to you. Shun vice in every Shape and every thing leading to it, especially bad company: (it is an old Saying a person is known by his company) a Stain or blot in your Charracter may be Soon got that will hardly ever wear out. and a good name is as presious ointment which spreads a wide perfume. he that walks with the wise shall be wise says Solomen but a companion of fools shall be destroy^d: dont indulge any diversion that tends to bring a blimish. cards are what you have I hope been convinc^d. are attend- ed with temtations not to be hazarded by those who are oblig^d to Shun all apperance of evil.

I beg of you to learn the rules of Singing if possible, that so you may freequently wake up your Glory, I mean your Tongue to praise God. I am rejoyct to hear so well of your proficiency by the hand of the pressident. give him no ocation to retract his good oppinion but rather to strengthin him in it. I hope to send you wherewith to answer the demands on you there. Some- time in may if possible.

I have mislaid your Letter: desire you would write again directly and let me know once more when and where the commence- ment will be for I have forgot what you said about it: sho^d. there be a short vacanncy this Spring improve it to getting forward while others may be triffling; and at commencement visitt us if God continue Life and health. Daily ply the throne of Grace for pardon, Grace, & everything you need for this & the next Life: go to Christ

as an allsufficient fountain of all good ; get an Intrest in his favour, then you are happy & Safe, without it most miserable. Constantly ask his assistance and Blessing on your Studies, that is the most likely way to Excell. this do in the exercise of faith and then you may humbly hope for acceptance & a Blessing and have many gracious promises to incourage your hope : it is wisdoms voice they that Seek me early shall find me : and God never said to any of Jacobs Seed Seek ye me in vain.

I pray God keep and Bless you and abuntantly fit you to do Service for him in the world when I shall be Silent in the Dust. we all Send our Love to you & Respects love & Service to all Relletives & friends. I desire a line by the first oppertunity in which let me know the Several particulars of your weekly charge, that So I may conduct accordingly. there will be no difficulty now of Sending to Cap^t. fundas at any time : and I intreet you to mend your Spelling : practice and Care will soon do it ; Spare no pains call in the assistance of an intimate friend, and every Spare minute may be improved :—

Your affectionate father—

EPH^M WILLIAMS

III

June y^e 10 1750

DEAR CHILD :

I have but a moment to write ; and first, fault you for omiting your Duty by your Brother.

I am glad to here of your having got so into fav^r with the President, pray dont do any thing to forfit it but use all possible endeavors to increas it ; don't forget these cautions : and if possible make proficiency in spelling writting & Singing : but above all secure an instrest in Christ and labour after a solid and well founded hope and assurance of it.

I send you Dr. Watts^{ls} orthodoxy and Charity—D^o.—Colemans Life. there is very good things to be got in boath

I also send you M^r Wrights treatise on Being Born again and I Desire and charge you to read it frequently ; it is an excelent Directory and the rules plain and practi-

cable : and observe well his councils and cautions in his excellent discourse in the close from Exodus 23 v 2. And may God teach you to proffitt by all advantages for your Souls good ; and besure to pray daily for his Spirritt to sanctifie all meens for your everlasting good, comfort, and Joy, both now and forever.

Mine with your mothers Love to you, and Service to all friends perticularly to all Relletives &c

Your very affectionate father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

P. S. write by Mr. Woodbridge

IV

STOCKBRIDGE: March: 13th 1751

DEAR CHILD

These are to let you know I have had a very uncomfortable winter not one really well day ; but am I hope through the goodness of God something better th^o now so poorly it is with some difficulty that I write. my advice is that you Improve all the advantages you now enjoy to prepare your selfe to do Service for God in your day and generation. now is the time, your advantages are great and your time at the school will be soon out : above all things keep close to God and let it be your constant daily practice to seek the Blessing of Heaven and all needful assistance from above, to Inable you to make proficiency in divine knowledge as well as Humane : give up and devote your selfe Soul and Body to God and beg earnestly his assistance protection and Blessing in all your ways and undertakings. wait on Christ in all His Holy ordinances : God has tied us to ordinances—th^o not himselfe.

leave nothing undone you shall wish you had done when Death comes. be allways actually as well as Habbittually prepared for the coming and Kingdom of Christ, and then you may go on your way allways Rejoicing in hopes of the Glory of God

I would Intreet you to endeavor daily to Improve your selfe in writting and Spelling, they are very ornamentall to a scholler ; and the want of them is an exceeding great Blemish. I also doubt not

you may with pains learn to bear a part in vocall musick ; if your voice don't agree so well with the Tenor learn the Base, it is a Gracefull part of musick. as for your other studies the Rev^d President will best direct you : besure endeavor by your whole Conduct to gain in degrees of his affection by all possible dutifull Cariage towards him : one line of Recomendation from him may some time or other be of vast Service to you : Remember it. as to company, Shun all that is prophane and vicious as you woold the infection of the Plague : and Remember the Aphorisme of the wisest of Israels Kings (viz) He that walketh with the wise shall be wise but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

I have wrote to Cap^t Funda of Claverick to send you ten Pounds New York curancy as soon as possible, to Mr. Buckee at New York. to whome you must write, desiring him to deliver it to whome you shall direct him so soon as he shall Receive it.

Your Brother Josiahs wife brings this, don't fail of sending me a Letter by her at her Return ; and lett me then hear of your wellfare and also informe me of your present Debts. I hope Co^{ll} Williams * will Return from England in a short time, by whome probbably I may be inabled to do further for you. let me know where you Board : I sho^d be very glad if you could get in with the President am satisfied it might be greatly for your advantage—

I woold not have you think of coming to visitt us till the Commencement : it is so far and so chargeable : improve the vaguancy to the Best advantage, and Redeem time so that you may be Indulg^d longer in your visitt at the Commencement which will be very pleasing to the President as also to me. Cap^t Kellogg will probabely come or send one or two Indian boys † sometime in April or beginning of may ; if they come do all in your power to keep them easey and contented & advise others to do so ; don't let the least occation

of offence be offer^d them at any time : appear their friend on all occations. I wish you the protection and guidance of Heven in all your Lawfull ways : may God Bless you & make you a Blessing in your day and generation. with herty Love from me your mother and all of us I Subscribe your very affectionate father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

V

To

MR. ELIJAH WILLIAMS

AT NEWARK IN

NEWJERSEY—

TO BE LEFT AT M^r BUCKEE^s

IN WHITE HALL : NEWYORK †

DEAR CHILD,

I now write by the way of Albany hoping for a speedy conveyance : I woold inform you that. Cap^t fonda Promist Cap^t Kellogg some weaks ago he woold send you ten Pounds newyork curancy, which he then owed me ; I hope you have got it before now ; if not, or if you have, let me hear from you speedily : I very much wonder you sho^d be so negligent of your duty in wrighting to me. I did not think you could have omitted it for such a length of time : if you neglect your duty in other Regards in like manner, especially in the Concerns of your Soul ; your case is deplorable. I once more solemnly charge you to keep close with God. in daily Secret prayer, from which you may reap abundance of comfort ; the neglect of which will bring you much sorrow and bitter repentance if God ever shew you mercy. avoid bad Company ; love them that behave well. incourage vertuous and manly actions, and venerate Piety wherever it appears. make a wise Improvement of time. Emulate to excell in learning, and don't forget former admonitions in many things I have cautioned you about ; and besure let me have the Comfort of hearing well of you : and I pray God Bless you & quallify you for doing eminent Service for him when I shall

* This "Coll Williams" was his eldest son: and a great traveller and sailor for those days. J. F. D.

† These Indian boys were doubtless some of the scholars from the mission school referred to in the introduction. J. F. D.

‡ How many inhabitants living in New York City to-day know where, or what, is Whitehall. Most of them woold probably say: "Why! at the head of Lake Champlain." J. F. D.

Sleep with my fathers. we all Joyn in sending our kind love to you and are through the Goodnes of God prety well.

M^r Edwards is to be reinstald here the Second thirsdlay in August next.* Give my respects to M^r President and excuse my not writting to him now, my hurry would not permitt.

my Service to all friends

from your affectionate father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

STOCKBRIDGE July 7 1751

VI

To

MR. ELIJAH WILLIAMS

AT

NEWARK

NEW-JERSEY

P^{ER}. FAV^R OF M^R WRIGHT

STOCKBRIDGE Aug^t 26 1751

DEAR CHILD,

Yours by M^r Wright is come safe to hand ; much rejoyce to hear of your well-fare. I Bless God for it. am Exceeding sorry to hear of M^{rs} Banks Death, a loud call to all the fammily in perticular to prepare for sudden Death : I expect you will be oblig^d to look new quarters & Indeed was very Sorry when I heard you was in a Publick House. now if it be possible get in with the president ; I have wrote to him to oblidge me & you. do you Second it forwith and be importunate, with great Submission for Admission. Seek and take his advice in every case wherein you think it may promote your proficiency in lerning : and besure seek it in your Soul Concerns.

I am in a very poor State of health have had last weak a most severe turn of the Asthma : am scarce able to sett up to wright this short line. I desire you to come on Board for New-york the day after Commenement to see me once more, it may be it will be the last oppertunity.

Send you 3 dollers by M^r Wright to pay your way along. will endeavor to gett a

* Jonathan Edwards was the successor of John Sargeant, coming to Stockbridge after the disruption at Northampton. He resided and preached and wrote there until 1758, when he went to Princeton to succeed his son-in-law, Aaron Burr, as president of the college.

Horse to Cap^t fondas by then you Reach there. I am not able to Inlarge, refer you to M^r Wright for anything further.

We all send our kind Love to you & Service to friends.

from your most affectionate father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

P.S.—Order matters so as to get to york the day after Com^t if possible.

VII

STOCKBRIDGE Jan^y 27 1752.

DEAR CHILD,

I gladly Imbrace this oppertunity by your Brother to write you a short line to lett you know through the great goodness of God I am still mending as to my Health ; wishing above all things my Soul may prosper and be in helth ; and may that be your dayly care and prayer : and do remember that they who seek God early have a gracious Promise of finding him surely : give up your selfe to him daily and wait on him for his Blessing in all the ways of his appointment. draw near to Christ at his Holy Table, it is a most scandalous neglect of multitudes to omit it : and I desire you would let me know by a letter by your Brother, how much money you have got at New-York on Capt Kelloggs account, and how far that is likely to go. if you want any Books that the President thinks proper Buy them by means of his assistance : shall I hope be soon able to pay him again sho^d you have any need to apply to him for any.

I hear last night 2d Hand from coz Elisha Williams of Weathersfield that his father is gott safe to Jamaca or Antego ; had a very long and dangerous voyage, and the Ships crew perishd with famine had not they been Relieved and Supported out of his own Private Stores .perswade your Brother not to Buy any land in the Jerseys if you can possibly ; I have laid a vastly better scheem for him hear : mine and your mothers & your sisters kind Love to you, and Respects to the President and sallutations to all friends.

from your very affectionate father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

VIII

To
 MR. ELIJAH WILLIAMS
 AT
 NEWARK
 IN THE JERSEYS
 TO THE CARE OF CAPT FONDA *
 TO FORWARD TO
 M^r ABRAHAM BUCKEE
 IN NEW YORK FOR SPEEDY CONVEYANCE
 &CCCC

STOCKBRIDGE Feby, 13 1752.

DEAR CHILD

I rejoyce to hear of you wellfare and pray God continue your Health and give you wisdom and Grace to Improve it for His Glory and your and friends Joy & Comfort. I understand by your Brother what a sad complaint Mad^m Wheeler makes of her Son Timothys Conduct: and how wickedly he imposd on her and Cap Wheeler: I desire you to go to her and find out whether she would be willing and is desirous to inform me of the whole of his management and also how much the things were worth that were unjustly taken from Her, with a desire to me to discourse him on the affair: I believe I can make him ashamed of it and do her Justice, he is in a good capacity now to do it. lett the whole case be fully laid open & what evidence can be sent & Mad^m Wheeler sign it with her own Hand. give my Humble Service to her & tell her I heard of it before but could not believe it till now. I suppose Cap^t Wheeler and all on that side the question will assist: gett me Entelligence as soon as possible, I will serve her all in my power: if she dont act freely drop it I will have nothing otherwise to do with the Cause &c.

* Will the reader please go with this letter from the frontier home of E. W. over to the Hudson River through the forest, two days' trip, to Claverack. Then see Captain Funda and ask him to take it along next time he sails his sloop down the river, and leave it at Buckee's—a house of call at the (now) Battery. There it will be stuck up over the mantelpiece, till some one happens to be going over to the Jerseys: to whom Buckee—"Prithee take this letter to the young Englishman Williams residing with the scholar Burr at New-ark." That's the way it was done doubtless.

In 1893 our Post office Department expended \$81,074,104, part of which was used in carrying your letter from Whitehall to the Fort at Berings Straits—7,000 miles perhaps—for two cents.
 J. F. D.

Blessed be God I am growing better I hope.

We all send our kind love to you & salute all friends

Your affectionate fath^r

E WILLIAMS

P.s. thank Mad^m Wheeler kindly for the Receipts she sent me, let me here from you as soon as may be.

IX

STOCKBRIDGE April 12 1752.

DEAR CHILD

I cant forbear writing to you hoping they will be of some service th^o they bring me no present Returns. We now send you to m^r Buckees by m^r Timothy Hopkins 3 Shirts & 2 pair of Stockings; if you want thred Stockings you must buy them: be sure get your things carefully Repaired in Season. (an old saying) A Stitch in time saves nine: if you want money lett me know it. I look for Co^{ll} Williams Home from Antigua every day, hope to be able to answer your demands soon after. Prthe Remember not to Loose a minutes time you can possibly Spare in perfecting your Selfe in Spelling wrighting & Singing: these things are Essentials in a Scholler, and greatly ornimental, especially the 2 former: a Scholer and poor writer & poor Speller is a perfect Solecism. I hope the President is not wanting in giving you his friendly instructions; but above all things look to God for a Capacity to learn & a Heart & wisdom to improve all advantages while you are favourd with them. Take time by the forelock, it is bald behind; one Hour lost can neve be Recovd: our time is very short our work very Great & our account will be very Strict, & our sentence will be ereversible: ply the throne of Grace for all you want, Erly Importunate seekers are likely to be sure finders. Walke with the wise, be not a Companion of fools; be not wise in your own Eyes, be Humble watchfull prayerfull. Remember before Honour is Humillity.

let me hear from you by M^r Hopkins if possible &c—

We all send our love to you. these come from your most affectionate & concernd Father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

X

(No date, but probably written in May, 1752.)

DEAR CHILD

I have to inform you that on Lords day the first of this Instant I was all in a moments time seized with a fit of the numb Palsy which deprived me of all sence & strength on my left side from head to foot and all most deprived me of Speech for some time; but by the Blessing of God on the meens used I am so far Recovered as to be able to sett up and write a little & walk the room some little matter : may the thretning Providence be sanctified, to me & to you, to quicken us in our preparations for a sudden Death : this is of Infinite Concernment. our life is a vapour that appears for a little time & than vanishes away. give your Selfe first to the Lord and then to his Church & People according to the will of God. that is the way to Comfort here & happiness hereafter.

I must inform you for may be this may be the Last oppertunity I may have to Instruct and Caution you for your best Good, that I have observ^d you have made but poor proficiency in writting & Spelling ; and in Reading even in the Bible : you are exceeding apt to miss words and dont observe your Stops : and you Read too fast : I beg of you to take the utmost pains to mend all those Defects : it will be esteemd an unpardonable crime to come out of Colledge : as you certainly will : so resembling one that never saw one unless you double your diligence, in amending those things : I know not what proficiency you make in other parts of learning but if they are of a Peice with what I have mentioned : and you dont amend : it woold have been better and more especially for you that you had never gon to Colledge : a schollar : that can neither write nor Spell nor Read : is a terrible Solecism : I intreet you will take all possible pains to fitt and quallifie your Selfe so as to be an Honour to your family : to your Selfe

& a great Blessing in the world in whatever Station divine Providence may fix you ; and further I intreet you to learn to Sing : tho it is not so nattural as could be wisht, yet I knowe divers persons that could not sing much better than dumb persons that by taking pains have lernt to sing one part : either tenor or Base. and do it very gracefully : and that that has been done by others under like disadvantages may be done by you : your Brother Eph^m earnestly desires you woold mend in every article mentioned in the Premises or he says your Sisters will be the Better Schollars—but care and pains and dilligence will surmount every difficulty : emaginable. The time now before you at Colledge will presently be out : and then the great advantages you now injoy for these things will end in great measure. So that it is now or perhaps never with you.

Your desirable Cozen John Williams of hatfield was sudenly carried out of the world by the nervous feevor and the Co^{ll} his father in an exceedingly Low state : and your Brother Thomas the last we heard from him exceeding dangerously sick & his life allmost despaired of & what may be the next news God only knows. we are every moment liable to Death in unthot of ways : your Brother got an unhappy fall from his Horse, which begun his Illness—tho he was all most recovered got out to soon and got cold and emedately Relapst. it is a month since we have heard from him : want sadly to hear and am all most afraid. Your Brother Josiah has sold his farm over the River for near four and seventy hundred Pounds and is going back again over the Pond. and Josiah Jones is going also : and we are going to Build a sawmill just by their doars there now directly : your Sister Josiahs wife has a great mind her Brother Thomas should come and settle close by them : the land that we have contrived for him to have if he will come is one Hundred acres Joyning on your Brothers, their Housis may be within 3 or 4 score Rod of each other : and the Hundred acres will not cost above one hundred Pounds their

currency: and just by the sawmill. & a Black Smith they will want forth with: among them. for there is like to be 6 or 7 family very soon. I desire you would discourse with some of your uncle days folks. and let them know these things: if you can, see Thomas him selfe: I suppose it will be greatly for his advantage tho it be 3 mile from meeting, it is a good level Road not one Hill in it: and it will be handy to where the meeting House must stand in that society over the Pond, which will not be long first; and the sawmill so neer it will be easy building: and there is the best of timber on the Land for Building. if M^r day or any of his Brothers have a mind to come or if he cant they must convey a letter to your Brother or to me as soon as possible for there are persons enough stand ready to buy but we will let nobody have the land till we hear from them. you had best go to Brother days as soon as may be and read him this paragraff. We all send you & Brother days family our kind Love & M^r Jonathan Serg^t & family and Sister Coopers with sallutations to all friends. pray get us an answer to these Requests, as soon as may be and let me know if you have got the money that Cap^t Kellog wrote for &c

I am your very affectionate father—

EPH^m WILLIAMS

P.S.—I would have wrote to Brother day & M^r Serg^t do you tell them but I am not able the doctors will not allow me to write nor Read but a few minutes at a time: and the Berer is just going also: tell M^r Serg^t I expect to send him his money for Mrs. Serg^{is} Tomb-Stone in a very short time if an oppertunity presents for safe conveyance &c.

E W——s

XI

STOCKBRIDGE JUNE 17 1752

DEAR CHILD

I with much difficulty wright you a few lines Just to let you know, that my Health & Strength seem to Decline Daily, and I dont Expect to continue long here unless some Remarkable appearance of Heaven shol^d Prevent: may a Gracious & merciful

God prepare me for whatever his Holy will shall be concerning me. I desire to be Humbly waiting on God my Salvation for all things needful either for my Comfort here or my Happiness hereafter; it is also my earnest desire & Prayer to God to Bless you and make you a Blessing to inable & dispose you to Improve your time & pressent oppertunities & advantages for boath Soul & body dilligently wisely & faithfully. now or never is the time to provide for Eternity. now or never is the only time to quallyfie your Selfe to serve God & your Generation: let me therefore press you Husband well your time, while you injoy such a preasious season. not one past moment can ever be Recald. in-deavor to perfect your Selfe in every thing that is likely to Serve your best Intrist. I desire you would observe in your wrighting to make proper Distances between words: dont Blend your words together: & use your utmost endeavors to Spell well, consult all Rules likely to help you: & such words as Require it allways begin with a Cappitol Letter: it will much Grace your wrighting: try to mend your Hand in wrighting every day all oppertunities you can possibly get to Consult Letters. observe Strictly Gentlemens meathod of wrighting and superscribing it may be of Service to you: you can scarce Conceive what a vast disadvantage it will be to leave the Colledg & not be able to write & Spell well: learn to write a pretty fine Hand as you may have ocation: as for other parts of learning I hope I need not say anything: the Pressident will he tells me let you know anything you ask of him: and gladly Serve you all in his powr. never be backward in asking his advice: it may greatly Serve you hereafter. he tells me you have made a laudable proficiency the last year. may God inable you to go on & prosper & Bless your Studyes. Seek to him. ply the throne of Grace Day & night & cease not till you have obtain^d a well Grounded hope that you are safe in Christ that your Sins are frely pardond & you are Sanctified & Justified in the name of the lord Jesus & by the Spirrit of God. See your own nothingness & utter unwor-

thiness of any mercy. See your pollution & vileness & cry mightily to God: for cleansing by the Blood of Christ, and for his Holy Spirit to enlighten & Sanctify you & Confirm you daily more & more to his moral likeness & Image: there is but one thing that deserves our highest care & most Ardent desires, and that is we may answer the great End for which we were made; viz to glorify God & do all the good we possibly can to our fellow men, while we live in the world. Carefully improve time precious time. when you cease from labour & other Studies, fill up your time in Reading meditation & Prayer and let your Heart be Employed as much as possible in divine thoughts and always look up to Christ for strength & Grace to enable you to perform every duty of the Christian life: beg his assistance in all things, he is a very libberall giver & never said to the Seed of Jacob Seek ye me in vain. & I pray God give you understanding in all things. Behave with all possible Respect to the Rev^d President: he will sett you an example of all that is truly valluable: keep Company with the wise & you will grow wiser. Shun bad Company as much as possible, they are only a pest to humane society & ought to be carefully avoided: Conversation that will proffitt is really valluable & such only is. I want to hear the Presidents determination as to his voyage to Great Britain: let me hear from you by the first opportunity, and as often as may be: besure write by mad^m Edwards: we are all beside my selfe in some measure of Helth & send our kind Love to you & pleases to salute the President & all friends. Remember & practice the above precepts. and I pray God Bless them to your advantage &c—
from your carefull & most affectionate Father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

ELIJAH WILLIAMS

XII

STOCKBRIDGE March 29 1753

DEAR CHILD,

I have received your Letter of Feby: 28. 1753. with Joy, & Bless God to hear of

your Health & Proficiency. I observe you have mended much in your wrighting & Spelling, nevertheless you have left Room to Grow, therefore shall chearfully continue my Instruction to you &nd propose what Rule well observ^d will be of Service to you; viz Attend the Rules laid down in the youths Instruktor in the English Tounge: from Dixon Bailey Owen and Strong: Printed at Boston 1746. I direct you to furnish your Selfe with one Speedily. you must not follow my Hand wrighting for an Example, for I am apt to mistake: I never had but Common English Learning; I was when young several winters under Cap^t Goddard master, he was a Excellent master, a good Speller & charming wrighter also fine Arithmetition. Kept School at Boston many years and once told me as he was once walking down King Street met Judge Davenport, who stopt a minute, and said Cap^t Goddard there is one word I have often seen in your writing which you all ways spell wrong; —S^r your Servant; & he said he never forgot it in his life; I wou'd have enlarg'd but am not able. I beg of you to git the Book I directed you too, and spend some time Every day in Looking into it, let me have a speedy answer. I commend you to the Grace of God & remain.

y^r affectionate fatherEP^H WILLIAMS

P.s. presst my Service to y^e Pre^{dt} & his Lady

XIII

STOCKBRIDGE June 4th 1753

DEAR CHILD

I gladly imbrace every opportunity to know how the State of my Helth stands, & that of friends. I have been seemingly growing better till a few days since a remarkable Providence hapend, by which I lost perhaps 2 quarts of Blood in about 24 Hours: but I hope it is Stopt; what will be the Event time will Reveal. I refer the Circumstances of this affair to M^r Badgers information &c It seems to me you a little forgett the 5th Comm^t in neglecting to write to me in my age & under such a complication of Bodily mallidies: it will not

be but a little time before all Correspondence of this kind will cease for Ever &c ; & this is the best Season for Speedy conveyance, therefore improve it. Remember to Improve well present time, our all depends on it Respecting Boath time & Eternity : the Book of Sollomons wise Proverbs is an Excellent Peice to be dailly Read. I mean Some portion of it : and indeavour to Treasure it up in your memerie & allways look to God for his blessing on it. It is perhaps as well adapted as any of the Sacred wrighting to make you wise to Salvation. I hertily wish I had made it my business in youth to have made it master of the whole, & perhaps my memorie was then able to have attaind to : it would have in Some measure quallified me to entertain Conversation the most proffitable on all most all ocations &c &c. But I trespass on my doctors direction in writting so much as this : therefore bid you farewell. Mercy & Truth be with you : Amen : If oppertunity present give my Duty to Gov^r Belcher & Lady : & inform his Excelency that Providence has forbid my writting more than 25 moneths, my Head will not bear Reading or writing & Tell if I dare presume to aske such fav^r it would be to Receive a short line from his Exelency & give my Regards to the President & his Spouse & sallutations to all friends perticulerly Sister Cooper & M^r Jonthar Serg^t & Spouse and all sisters fammily. & I hope the money will infallibly Come at Com—t

We all send you our Loves : your sister dwights poorley.

yours affectionately
E. WILLIAMS.

XIV

(Addressed to Stockbridge)

DEARFIELD Aug^t 14th 1753.

DEAR CHILDREN.

(Viz) Elijah, Judith and Elizebeth, Williams.

I hope I may live to see you again by Gods leave, but it very uncertain. For wheather I shall be able to take a Jorney to you & Return hear before Winter is

quite uncertain, unless I sho^d gett helpe from a difficulty that yett remains. I was taken with a Pain in the Pitt of my stomach & through my body in left side down to my Hip ; & Can not be free from it never since, night nor day : ever Breath I drow Effecs me : but 2 days past it is mov^d higher up near my sholder but still from my stomach to my back. unless that is mov^d I shall not be able to Ride. sho^d it be so, I shall have a great desire to see Elijah before you go to the Jerseys before Commencement ; if your mother can be spard to come here, so timely as you can, come with her. and I shall be very glad to se Elize hear before she returns to Weathersfield, which I perceive they trust she proposses to do shortly. I desire also Elijah will not enter into now new bargain with his Brother unless he will sell him the one Hundred & fifty-five acres of Land, and at the Price he took it, till I have an oppertunity to see you. I have a great desire you sho^d go to Cambridge Colledg the winter coming ; I think further learning may prove more for your advantage than money or land :—

but above all things Improve time to the best purposes : time is very short & very pressious. now is the accepted time and now is the day of Sallvation. and a very little time more may be in which your Eternity Depends. I must beg you to be close in your attendance on the Publick worshyp of God, & dayly seek God in your clossett : & Christ has sufficiently and graciously incurag^d you so to do. I woold gladly inlarge but I cant stoop to wright it so hurts my stomach. the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with each one of you. Amen.

My most affectionate Love I send you, & desire to hear from you seveally by a Line &c

from your most affectionate father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

P—s.—Judith I desire you to send me 2 good choice cheeses, one old one & one new, I will pay you to content for them —I will send my leather bags to bring them in &c.

E— W—s

XV

(Addressed to Stockbridge)

SPRINGFIELD Sep^{br} 1—1753

DEAR CHILD

I have Receivd yours the day before yesterday but have had no oppertunity to discourse with your Brother. nevertheless I had rather you sho^d come Home than take in a stranger ; if your Inclination is to manage the Farme you must either have an eye Steadely over the Servants otherwise it will come to nothing. I dont know what he means by leaving the Stock & negroes you dont know what Stock there is. I believe some of the young oxen at Massachusetts * he intends to sell at Hatfield, you had best look to that. and as to the negroes you had best agree what you must give for them in case you sell them when you please and buy other helpe unless they please and lett him know. If I sho^d not come back to live at Stockbridge, he is to Remember I must have an Equivalent for all my Privelidges. (viz). the House Room, a Horse allways kept, firewood fitted at the door, and allso Two acres of land at the door : all which will undoubtdly be worth one Hundred Pounds p^r year old tenor &c &c—

then there is & will be a great Charge to bring forward the farm forthwith, or it will be of small proffitt. and every Stroak Cutt on the farm will be more proffitt to him than to you when it returns into his Hand—especially if the lease be short. the Swamp must be flowd before winter. & there must be propprer sheads sett up before winter and more barn Room. all such things and necessary Charge of finishing the House will be his proffitt & ought to be at his Expence &c—but I cant on a Sudden & in my pressent Hurry do but little about it I believe you had need to be well advised & Counceld : wish Co^{ll} Dwight † was to advise in the Case, he will be at Home anone : and I hope to see you before you finish any bargain : till I see you you cant act nothing leagally till

* This means Fort Massachusetts, situate near Greylock Mountain and commanded by his Son Col. E. Williams.
J. F. D.

your of age &c; wheather you will not be oblidge^d to go to the Jerseyes before your mother comes down I dont know but conclude you must & if so there will be time to Informe me further, before anything further is compleated. dont be concernd at all with Collhoon : I can gett better helpe, he has no more Contrivence than a babe &c—but I wish you may be well directed & that the Smiles of Providence may allways attend you : & that above allthing your Soul may Prosper & be in Health &c—

In utmost Hurry from your Loveing father.

EPH^m WILLIAMS

ELIJAH WILLIAMS

XVI

To

M^R ELIJAH WILLIAMS

IN

STOCKBRIDGE

P^R M^{RS} GRAVES.DEERFIELD, Octo^{br} 11—1753

DEAR CHILD

I have but a minute to write in, but least what I sent by the way of Hoosuk sho^d fail, I would now tell you if it be possible gett buck wheat Straw of the Indians, you may for a trifle ; it is high time to do it ; and lay a good Cock Round each Tree ; but dont lett the Straw come within two foot of the body of the trees least the mice bark the trees ; in the Spring of the year you may lay the Straw near the tree, it need not be renewed more than once in two or three year if you lay it about a foot thick at first, and about 7 or 8 feet Round from the tree. you Cant Conceive the benefitt of it, you never need to plow up your orchard any more in case you practice doing so : unless you do the orchard so directly your orchard will begin to decay forthwith. I am more sencible of the want of aples than perhaps you may be aware of. I have sent as farr as northfield & northampton and all the Towns Round to gett 6 Barrills of apples, & dont yet know I can gett any at all ; so that you

† His Son-in-law.

need not fear taking too much pains about bringing on a good orchard. The Indians and father Elias always raise buck-wheat, and the straw Rotts where it is threshed in the field; you may always get a supply which I should esteem a great privilege:—

Tell your sisters they must send my things & your mother's things as you can get opportunity: if you send the things I want seasonably to Poontoosuk,* Col^l Biele will bring my things when he comes down, which will be pretty soon. I hope you have got some shrub for me, want it; it is a sickly time still with us & in the neighbouring Towns. M^r Williams of Hadley very dangerously sick if living. I want to hear of your welfare, for which I am ever concerned: I wish Elize could contrive to let me see her as she goes to Weathersfield, if she purposes to winter there. Col^l Dwight lodged^d with us & M^r Quincy the last night but one; was then well, hoped to get home next Saturday night.

We are in some comfortable measure of health, I mean in your brother's family: let me hear from you by the first opportunity: mine with your mother's love to all of you. wishing you all Happiness here and Eternal Happiness & Blessedness in the coming world &c.—from your very affectionate father

EPH^m WILLIAMS.

P—s—I want the Red Jacket & blue military Britches & the Green old winter Jacket some good cheese & the shrub &c &c &c

XVII

(Addressed to Stockbridge.)

DEERFIELD NOV^{br} 7th 1753

DEAR CHILD

I write to let you know the doctor is come home & left his wife in a hopeful way of getting well, but exceeding weak. She has not gone once across the Room as yet; he left her last Friday morning; he is in some hopes of her being able to come about a fortnight hence: it was a wonderful deliverance from immediate death. We

* Poontoosuk was the old, and Indian name of Pittsfield—still retained in the lake north of that town.
J. F. D.

think it very strange we don't hear from you from no quarter at all: We did expect to see Eliza before now. would have her come by Westfield: it is so late it is not safe coming by Poontoosuk, if you don't keep the old Horse very well he will never be able to come again, and his shoes must be removed & sharpened.

You must send the things that have been sent for: & also the thing I put over my head to keep my Ears warm which I button under my chin: your mother desires you to send her a quarter of a yard of calico, of your sister Dwigths; the same piece you talked of getting her a Gown for; she wants it to border her petticoat with. Cloe wants her shoes extremely, and I should be very glad you would get me a pair of very good Double-soled shoes for winter if you can get M^r Bancroft to make them for upper leather the same thick calve skin he made my pumps of & if you have got some of Turners sole leather I believe that will be good. I can not stir out abroad my shoes are so thin: & tell your Brother Eph^m † I want to see him very much before he goes to Boston—he will no doubt come by Northampton—I desire him to be sure to come here, before he goes down &c &c: I am very apt to take cold if I stir abroad, otherwise I am much as I have been of some time. the rest of us are pretty well. we don't hear from Capt Kellogg since I wrote you before. We all send you our kind love to all of you. and Service to friends. wishing you Soul Prosperity as well as Bodily. & am your affectionate & very thoughtful Father—

EPH^m WILLIAMS

XVIII

(Addressed to Stockbridge.)

(No date: written from Deerfield in the winter of 1754.)

DEAR CHILD

I much wonder you have not let me hear from you till now; it seems to be forgotten by you, as you may find written in the 4th Chapter of Proverbs which I desire you to read; the whole of it frequently: & I

† This son—Col. Williams—was then a member of "The General Court" of the Province.—J. F. D.

desire all of my Children to do likewise. & the Contents of that Chapter also : & frequently Read the whole Book, they are excellent Aphorisms of the wisest of men, worthy of your daily study and close application, and earnest prayer to God for his Blessing on. I never forget you in my daily supplications to God in my closet & in our social worship in the family. Remember what God says by the mouth of his Prophete in and Christ says in Matthew 6th Chap^r & 6 verse : there you will find a blessed & gracious promise of being heard & Rewarded openly.

I am under as comfortable a state of Health as I have been of late : but that is poorly and my limbs much fail me especially my knees my thighs & rms and my out ward man is sencibly failing daily. Pray for me all of you that my Inward man may be Renewed day by day. Remember former Councils and keep close to God : and then you may hope he will keep you from temptations or deliver from them and preserve blameless to his heavenly kindom. Amen : I cant write but a very little, it distresses my Head so that I cant bear it, therefore you must lett me hear from you the oftenner. I much want to hear from you but much more to see you all. I hope God will give me leave and opportunity to do so once more but if he does not, his will be done. I commit all of you my Dear Children to the tender care & keeping of the good Providence and special grace of God who is able to keep what we thus commit to him, & will keep all such as do so till that day to whome be Glory forever. Amen. I long to hear the unhappy differences at Stockbridge were happily ended. then I should hope the God of Love and Peace would be and abide with you all. Pray for it earnestly daily and commit all your ways to God, and he will direct your steps for you. I hope you will come and see me as soon as you can. I have wrote to your Brother to come this way from Boston and hope he will be hear by the weak after next at furthest. I expected he woold have been hear with you in december, and I

want some money extremely. I hear it is likely the Court will Rise next Weak. If your Brother and you sho^d be hear about the weak after next, and there sho^d be good slaying I sho^d be glad to come with your mother and give you a visitt but I have but one Horse—

I send my most affectionate and kind Love to all of you & sallutations to all friends. and Pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with you all : Amen.

from your loving and tender father

EPH^m WILLIAMS.

XIX

(Addressed to Stockbridge.)

DEERFIELD, March 30th—1754.

DEAR CHILD:

Wee want much to hear and know, the perticular circumstances of the Plott* against the English at Stockbridge. Pray don't fail of leting me know as soon as possible. Your mother purposses to sett out home next monday by the way of Poontoosuk : if she fails you might Send a Horse for her the latter end of next weak &c—I have got from Roxbury some choice frute Ciences (*sic*) : they are wrote on severaly : those for Cherys are very fine from England. I think there is but four of them. they are long enough to make two Each of them : graft them on the little Chery tree close to the Bee House. Cutt all the limbs of and sett all the cyons on that topp : it will be more likely to live then to leave any of the limbs alive to suck away the sap from the Cyons : & Cutt of every limb of the pare trees & graft boath those trees with orange pares toward the tops of those trees. & Cattern and Genitia pears all on the peare trees : all the other Cyons which I send & them which you could graft on thorns don't move them till next year so that if they live they then may be transplanted—

But above all things take care to gett your Soul Ingrafted in the true olive Christ Jesus & you will be safe & Happy for Ever. Amen &c—my love to all of your from your tender father

EPH^m WILLIAMS

* Hostile Indian troubles.