

## Letter From E. North, 1824

*The North family used to live at the intersection of Colebrook Road, (Connecticut Route 183) and Stillman Hill Road, (Connecticut Route 182). Enos North built the red barn, owned today by the Colebrook Land Conservancy, in 1797. Two of their sons migrated as pioneers to upstate New York in the early years of the nineteenth century. Some of their surviving letters back home are now in the possession of the Colebrook Historical Society.*

### Alexander, July 25<sup>th</sup> 1824

I now take the opportunity to write a few lines to inform you of situation of affairs here at present. We are still all well here, and a general time of health, though the country the fore part of the season was rather cold and dry, but it is very different at present. We have warm weather with a thunder shower almost every day. Our crops of all descriptions are very large, and promises abundance. There has been no season since I have been in this state that the crops were as large as they are at present. Some have begun to hay, and the principal part of the inhabitants will begin next week if the weather will permit. My wheat on the flats got injured by the late frosts and is not very promising. The late frosts injured the fruit considerable, although there is some fruit left. My grass is very stout – I calculate to begin to mow tomorrow. Your grass I have let out to be cut to halves. [His father owns a plot of land on which a crop of hay will be harvested.]

Your house Twombly occupies yet, and will probably stay there till he is drove out. He has done your chopping in such a manner that I will not accept it. He agreed to submit it to men to say what is right about it. I calculate to let it remain if there is any prospect of your moving here and settle yourself. If not, I must attend to it. Your house and garden what he has agreed to pay 7 dollars worth of cooper work for the use this season. Says he shall leave it in the fall. Your pastureland I occupy, your wheat what was not destroyed by the rust, I have sold in order to save it, and took chopping for it myself. I concluded it is not best to chop any more on your land unless there is a prospect of it being cleared the year it is chopped. Land lying over the year after it is chopped is apt to run up to green stuff and rending it very difficult to burn, and I think you will have job enough to clear what you have already chopped. I have 5 acres chopped on the flats and think it a very doubtful case whether I shall get a be—or not. You mentioned in your letter of my coming to Connecticut in the fall as it respects your goods coming on the canal. It would be perfectly useless for me to come on account of the safety of the passage. I should be very happy to visit Connecticut once more, but see no prospect of its being possible at present if I should happen to get a turn on my fallow. I must, of course, -la- that -sh- [?] would be impossible to do if I should come, and things must take a sufficient turn with me before I shall visit anywhere.

Saml. Benedict has bargained away his farm for 12 dollars per annum. [*He means "rent"*] Jones offered his for 10 dollars per annum. Noah has sold his Williams Lot the chance for \$150.00 dollars – a sum much more than it is worth. Thetis expects to get married before long, ditto Francis Benedict [who] now lives in the old Williams house. He left Canada early in the spring in consequence, as he says, of some of his Canadian neighbors being engaged in counterfeiting, and was fearful of being called on

as a witness against them. It is, however, the prevailing opinion here that he is more fearful of his neighbors there testifying against him. He dairent not show himself in Canada. He is practicing physic some here, though not a great deal.

**August 8<sup>th</sup>** I have detained this letter this long in order to ascertain the rate of fare on the canal, as it respects your goods coming that way. [*The Erie Canal, opened in 1825, was able to handle barges that were 98 feet long and 17 feet 10 inches wide, with a 6-foot draught.*]

The merchants in Batavia will not agree to fetch any goods and deliver them in Batavia except merchandise. You can, however, get them conveyed from Albany to Brockport for 87½ cents per hundred. Brockport lies northeast of Batavia. It is a new place, the distance from here I don't know, but wagons go from here one day each – back the next. I am informed there is not much danger of losing property on the canal. The forwarding masters in Albany will accept any property to be delivered by some of the forwarding masters in Brockport.

Wheat is not so promising as I wrote in the fore part of this letter. It is badly struck with the rust [*rust is caused by the presence of infected Barberry bushes*] and people are taking it down green as it is. Some fields are, however, ripe. My wheat is rusty and pretty slim. I have 3 acres on the ground – should be glad to swap it for 1½ acres of good wheat. I calculate to begin upon it tomorrow if the weather will permit. We shall continue to have some wet weather. Your haying is done and your half stacked up. I calculate you have about 3 tons for your part – good part of it clover. I have got in but about 3 acres of my grass – have been some unwell the week past with a swelling in my throat. Am, however, getting well of it and worked some yesterday.

It is beginning to be some sickly in the adjoining towns, and some in this town with the dysentery on a kind of camp distemper. There has been two deaths of children of the said complaint – otherwise it is very healthy.

Yours, etc.

E. North

*The envelope is addressed in five lines, 1<sup>st</sup>: Connecticut, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Mr. Lester North, 3<sup>rd</sup>: Colebrook, 4<sup>th</sup>: Meeting House Post Office, 5<sup>th</sup>: Connecticut.*

*On the left side, written vertically in different ink, and in another hand,  
"Alexander Aug. 14                      18½ [cents]*