

Buxton, Canada West
March 23, 1854

Mrs. Sarah Ann Harris
Weeksville
Care of Wm Dolly
Zion's Church
New York

My Dear Mrs. Harris:

I take up my pen to write you a few lines, after so long a delay. I suppose you all thought that we were all dead, but it is not so, I can assure you, although we have been quite sick since we arrived in Canada. I have been quite ill with the pleurisy, and, in the Fall, we all had the dumb ague and fever; but now we are enjoying good health, except my son John; it left him feeble and a pain in the side; but he never was strong in health. This is a healthy place-but little sickness except the ague and fever. We arrived in Chatham on the 13th May, after a pleasant journey. It's really beautiful to travel in the Spring, and to behold the different faces of nature's beauty. In the steamboat we went to Troy; then took the cars to Buffalo, and there we put up until Monday from Friday, and I found Buffalo a very pretty place indeed; then we took the steamboat for Detroit – a beautiful sail across the Lake – Erie – and out of sight of land, it seems to me as on the sea; and then we took the steamboat again for Chatham – then we were done and at our journey's end. Now Chatham is a fine place indeed, a town pleasantly situated on the banks of the Thames, and there we kept house six weeks – we had a small house – much cheaper than to board; and my husband went to Buxton, to the coloured settlement, a distance of six miles and purchased a farm of 50 acres, with nine acres cut down and one all cleared. The man who had taken it has to give it up, or build; it's a pleasant place. So my husband liked it and bought it and paid the money on the spot. He had to pay for the improvements and the balance on the ground – but if you buy a farm with no improvements on it, then it is two dollars and a half an acre. And he hired his house put up, and on the first of July, we moved on our farm.

O, my dear friend, how I do want to see you again; I do wish you would try and come to Buxton, Canada West. *Come to a land of liberty and freedom,*

where the coloured man is not despised nor a deaf ear turned to them. This is the place to live in peace and to enjoy the comforts of life.

In September, we got a fine cow, with a heifer calf ten months old. So I have been quite a country-woman. I both churned my own butter and milked my own cow. We have got three nice sows, and, by and by, I shall have some geese, and chickens and ducks, and all those things. Here is nine thousand acres of land now taken up by coloured people in Buxton, where we live; and Mr. King, the government agent, who sells the land, has purchased eight thousand more to sell at the same rate; and the people are coming in from all parts, and the place is filling up fast. I hear that OLD FILLMORE *is a screwing you all up tighter still, but don't stay there, come to Queen Victoria's land, where they are not makings laws to oppress and to starve you.* I raised a fine sight of tobacco. We had turnips as big as the crown of your husband's hat, and cabbage as large as a water-pail. O, don't laugh, for it's a fact – for the ground is so rich it raises everything up in no time. We were late, so we had only Fall things. There is a saw-mill and a grist-mill building in Buxton, and a school now here, with seventy or eighty scholars. *O, we are just beginning to live well enough without the white man's foot on our necks. Away with your King Fillmore, I am for Queen Victoria. God save the Queen.* We have all kinds of game, deer, raccoon, ground hogs, black squirrels, hens, pheasants, quails, wild turkey, wild duck, woodcock and red-headed woodpeckers, and sapsuckers, wild red raspberries and plumbs, crabapples and wild gooseberries, and all kinds of nuts. Not as cold as I thought. We have Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterian meetings, too. We are to have a log-rolling soon, and then we will have ten acres cleared. They (the people) all will help you to raise and log, and you help them again. Whatever you raise in the ground, you can sell it in Chatham, six miles from here. My husband walks up and down once or twice a week, and thinks nothing of it; but I hope soon we'll have a team of our own. There is a number come from Toronto to this place, as land can be got cheaper – 20 shillings an acre and ten years to pay it in, and land that will bring anything you plant just as I did in Weeksville (only it wanted more manuring); only put in the seed and pray to the Giver of rain, and they will come up. O, dear, how I want to see you again. Do come to Buxton, Canada West.

Mary Jane Robinson