



Letter to Mary Johnson of Worthington, Ohio, from L.S.
Holmes in Marion, 11/30/1846

Subject -- Hopeful suitor hearing of her engagement but pressing his suit

[Handwritten, script]

Marion, Nov. the 30th, 1846

I write for reasons which you in the perusal of this may discover. I would first say that I would forego even this if I was aware it would annoy [*sic.*] you. Also I hope you will give me credit for not deserving to influence your mind in any opinion you may now or will have cause for. In compliance with my wishes & your permission I embrace the opportunity. In a few days since had called & saw you (not however without making an amusing mistake which I presume you were in a few minutes afterwards informed of. Whoever that lady may be I would inform her (if she desires not to be taken for somebody else) to be careful not to turn around & look at me as if she herself was acquainted. Circumstances prevented me from conversing with you personally on a subject which I had not the courage to mention in the presence of others. I received back my letter accompanied by a Note from your self. It permitted me to call; whether for mere curiosity to see me I shall not pretend to determine. You also returned by note which was in accordance with my desires provided anything existed which would prevent an acquaintance the nature of which I thus mentioned.

I presume you understood me then & I presumed the returning of the Note was but simply a reply to that portion of my communication. You also remarked in yours that when circumstances were favorable Ladies might be enabled to make a decision. But in this case you considered them rather against & therefore say you will make no decision. Owing to this remark combined with your sending back my note I am placed in such a situation that I cannot with certainty determine your real meaning & therefore I desired to speak with you so I might not have formed an incorrect opinion. I also have desired that part of my previous communication in which it appears that you have somewhat (though slightly) mistaken. Since the time I wrote I have been informed of the existence of an engagement between yourself & a Gentleman with whom I am slightly acquainted. I know not that its true nor have I any reason to doubt its existence. If it is true "circumstances truly are against." If you had seen fit to have expressed yourself explicitly in your note to me, your confidence would have been safe. As I remarked before I for some time proposed an anxiety to become acquainted. Yet I hardly could have supposed that seeing & conversing with you so short a time could have made such an impression. I indulge no hopes! Should not be even willing to have the affections of any one confined upon me, as a

favor though everything desirable on earth should be connected with the Person of the Lady & I loved her above all earthly Objects. Yet for me to accept & reciprocate the esteem & love of anyone, that Esteem & love must be freely & voluntarily conferred [*sic*] upon me. I aprise [*sic*] you Miss Johnson (not withstanding I confess to you that I could love you more ardently than any lady I ever saw) that my feelings are at my command & under my controll [*sic*] & even yourself If I were in your presence, could not discover the emotion that might be raging within. Tis a relief to me thus to express myself even to you in whom I have not hope, except in the confidence I have in your respect for my feelings in preserving in your boosom [*sic*] inviolable what I have now communicated. Not permitting myself to believe for a moment that any third person will ever be made acquainted with the feelings of my heart as thus expressed unless in yours, mine should meet a response. You gave me credit for sincerity in what I said before which was but a desire to see you, 'tis different now. "The half was not told me" Will you give me credit for sincerity now? I hope so. You are aware Miss J. that you differed with me as to the prerogative [*sic*] of Ladies in making a decisions of a certain character. I yet entertain opinions the same as before expressed & if you look at it closer I think you will alter yours. You say the circumstances often permit, that may be yet those circumstances what ever they may be only prove that Ladies like others weigh circumstances & by their force form opinions & make decisions showing most conclusively that they of necessity exercise a prerogative [*sic*] in certain matters for if 'twere not so their independence as intelligent beings would be lost & their moral existence would purposely be inactive in mechanical. I hope Miss J. you will write me a letter. I shall not insist. Yet shall I not expect at least one. I wish to remain your friend & trust that I have not nor may not do anything to merit your displeasure. I shall feel if this is not answered that I have offended you, assuring you that if you desire there should be no correspondence between us I shall not again trespass upon your patience.

Yours

L.S. Holmes

Miss Mary

direct to Chicago, Ill