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"The Unanswered Question of Her Son's Biography": New Thoughts on Mollie Ives

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Abstract
Mary Elizabeth ("Mollie") Parmelee Ives (1850?–1929) has long been a figure of considerable mystery. As Stuart Feder put it, "She is scarcely mentioned in any of the family materials. . . . If not medically an invalid, strictly speaking, she appears to have been treated as one socially." Indeed, the evidence that has emerged heretofore suggests, at the very least, some unspecified "difficulty"—either physical or mental—associated with Mollie. However, a previously overlooked document in the Ives Papers appears to identify a precise physiological cause for Mollie's condition. This article surveys the extant materials concerning Mollie, describes her alleged symptoms, and re-examines them in the light of the evidence recently uncovered.

Composers' parents: How much is known of them? How much concern do they elicit? In the vast majority of cases—Signor Rossini, Madame Debussy, or Herr Stockhausen—the answer is "very little": Indeed, it is unusual for *Grove* even to provide them with forenames. The reason? Because it is the composers themselves, their musical works, and their subsequent influence that are valued, rather than the raw genetic material from which they were created. There are, of course, exceptions: One of a composer's parents might achieve a degree of vicarious fame because the composers furnished the relevant information, or because significant factors are associated with those individuals that supposedly deem them worthy of study. The most obvious example from among the so-called greats of music history is Johann Georg Leopold Mozart (1719–87), father of Johann Chrysostom Wolfgang Amadeus (1756–91), whose opinions and actions had a lasting impact on his son, both personally and professionally. Important, too, in a more general context, is the Bach family, because of its considerable influence over music in North Germany and elsewhere for more than two centuries.

What, then, of the parents of Charles Edward Ives (1874–1954)? Of Charles's father—George Edward Ives (1845–94)—we think we know a good deal, not least as a result of Charles's later, extended, comments regarding his father's influence on his musical development.[1] More recently, some aspects of Charles's veneration of George have come to be questioned, in the light of factual discoveries that suggest a history rather less gilded than that subsequently articulated by his son. To cite

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[1] For examples of Ives's remarks concerning his father, see, for instance, John Kirkpatrick, ed., *Charles E. Ives: Memos* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 42–49, 114–16, 131–33.

but two examples of the factional truth concocted by Charles, George was most certainly not (contrary to his son's narrative) a hero of the Civil War, but rather—as has conclusively been demonstrated by Stuart Feder—the subject of a court-martial on 3 July 1864, at which he pleaded guilty to the charges of "neglect of duty" and "conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline."[2] That George received a relatively mild punishment for his offenses—the forfeiture of one month's pay and close arrest for ten days—may to a considerable degree reflect the fact that the presiding officer at the trial was George's cousin, Lieutenant Colonel Nelson White, who in effect rescued George's subsequent army and civilian career from disgrace. A second example of Charles exaggerating his father's achievements is revealed by Jan Swafford in *Charles Ives: A Life with Music*.[3] Charles relayed on several occasions, not least on pages 45–46 of *Memos*, the now well-known story of how his father's Civil War band had been described as "the best . . . in the army" in an exchange between President Lincoln and General Grant. Unfortunately, on the only occasion when such an exchange could have taken place, George was (and had been for some time) on sick leave in Danbury; in other words, and contrary to the strong implication in Charles's version of the story, his father had been—as Swafford gracefully puts it—"not in attendance for his greatest moment of glory."

In view of circumstances such as those just outlined, what then are we to make of Charles's mother, Mary Elizabeth Parmelee Ives (1850?–1929), of whom her son says next to nothing? The picture in the extant literature of Mollie, as she was usually known, is somewhat sketchy: Probably the best-known description of her is that drawn by Feder, who reads a great deal into the scant information available to him. The gist of Feder's characterization might be summarized thus: "[Mollie] is scarcely mentioned in any of the family materials. . . . If not medically an invalid, strictly speaking, she appears to have been treated as one socially . . . [and] may have been beginning to undergo some form of mental deterioration . . . in the nature of a mood disorder or even presenile dementia."[4] However, Feder had at times a distinct tendency to let his psychiatrist's imagination run wild and to come to conclusions that were not always borne out by the facts.[5] Can Mollie truly, then, continue simply to be written off as "the unanswered question of her son's biography"? Or should she be given the benefit of a more objective—or at least clinically less speculative—appraisal? The aim of this article is to examine afresh, and in detail, the surviving concrete evidence concerning Mollie Ives, in order to try and draw some broader conclusions as to her true status and condition.

Some facts: Mary Elizabeth Parmelee was probably born on 2 January 1850, in Redding, Connecticut (in contradistinction to the majority of secondary sources,

[2] Stuart Feder, *Charles Ives: "My Father's Song"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 40–43.

[3] Jan Swafford, *Charles Ives: A Life with Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 25–26.

[4] Feder, *"My Father's Song,"* 223–28; the bulk of the material cited here is précised from page 227.

[5] Apart from the unreliable conclusions drawn concerning Mollie, one might also point to a further instance in *"My Father's Song"* of Feder's imagination running wild, in this case relating to Charles Ives's perceived homoerotic fantasies: see David Nicholls, "Unanswerable Questions/Questionable Answers," *Music & Letters* 75/2 (May 1994): 248–49.

which give 1849).[6] She was the fifth of the six children conceived by Noah David Parmelee (1808–52) and Mary Ann Parmelee née Smith (dates unknown), who had been married since 1831. At the time of Mollie's birth, Noah has been variously described by Feder as a tailor, by Swafford as a "square-jawed storekeeper," and by John Kirkpatrick as a farmer. According to Charles Ives (as reported by Swafford) Noah spent his spare time "tinkering with perpetual motion machines." By the 1870s, when George Ives began courting Mollie, her mother—now Widow Parmelee—was among Danbury's most prominent church singers. The Parmelees were originally descended from Belgian nobility, but their Danbury residence on River Street was, in Feder's words, "a fair distance socially" from the Ives' house on Main Street. On New Year's Day 1874, George Ives and Mollie Parmelee were married at Danbury's Methodist Episcopal Church, and they subsequently produced two children—Charles Edward and his younger brother, Joseph Moss (1876–1939). Figure 1 is a photograph of Mollie, probably taken at around the time of her wedding.

For the first five or so years of their marriage, George and Mollie lived in the old Ives family home on Danbury's Main Street, but from 1879 or 1880, when Charles's Uncle Lyman and Aunt Amelia wished to move into the house, George, Mollie, Charles, and Moss were dispatched to 16 Stevens Street, which, though only a few blocks away from Main Street, is rightly described by Feder as being "in another part . . . of town." About a decade later, the family again relocated, this time to 10 Chapel Place, which—as John Kirkpatrick notes—was "rebuilt from the barn up in back of the old house."[7] There they remained for a substantial period, which saw Charles leave for New Haven, George pass away, and Moss follow his brother to Yale. Although Uncle Lyman died in 1904, it was not the by-then-widowed Mollie who subsequently moved into the Main Street house as Aunt Amelia's companion, but rather her youngest sibling, the spinster Lucy Cornelia Parmelee, usually known as Aunt Nell. Indeed, it was only after the death in 1918 of Aunt Amelia—who bequeathed the use of the house to Aunt Nell for her lifetime—that Mollie, along with a relative from the White side of the Ives family, was able to return to the home in which her children had been born. She lived there until her death in 1929, by

[6] The information in these paragraphs is gleaned primarily from the following sources: Feder, *"My Father's Song,"* 59–61, 68–69, 120–21, 223–28; Kirkpatrick, *Ives: Memos,* 247–49; Vivian Perlis, *Charles Ives Remembered: An Oral History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), 6–8, 14–16; Swafford, *A Life with Music,* 38–40, 57–58. Almost every extant secondary source gives Mollie Ives's birth date as 1849, perhaps because she was described in her son's 1931 medical record as having died aged 80 (see note 15 below). That she actually died on 25 January 1929, aged 79, is a documented fact; but this date in itself immediately suggests that her correct birth year may have been 1850. In *"My Father's Song"* Feder categorically states that Mollie was born on 2 January 1850 (see page 60), inferring in a subsequent endnote that the source for this information was a Parmelee family Bible owned by Mollie's sister Lucy (see page 364, note 22 to chapter 4). A further (presumably independent) source giving 2 January 1850 is *Burpee's The Story of Connecticut: Personal and Family Records.* Volume IV (New York: American Historical Company, 1939), 804. However, *Burpee's* is not itself error-free, as it gives George Ives's death date as 5 (*recte* 4) November 1894. For the purposes of this article, and in the apparent absence of any primary source such as a birth certificate, the birth date given by Feder and *Burpee's* has been tentatively accepted as correct.

[7] Feder, *"My Father's Song,"* 84; Kirkpatrick, *Ives: Memos,* 248.

Figure 1. Mollie Ives as a young woman. Photo no. 29, The Charles Ives Papers, MSS 14, Irving S. Gilmore Library, Yale University.

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which time the whole building had been physically moved uphill to Chapel Place. Mollie apparently stayed inside the house while it was being shifted.

Although Mollie appears only infrequently in the Ives papers and associated literature, her appearances there are a little more numerous than some commentators might lead us to believe, especially if third-person references are included alongside first-person actions. In the Appendix are collated what appear to be all of the concrete references to Mollie in the Ivesian literature—though note that concrete means not only those references found in correspondence and other family documents, but also reminiscences of her provided by both first- and second-hand witnesses.

Several matters relating to the collation are worthy of attention: First, there is only one first-hand description of Mollie, that provided by T. Findlay MacKenzie, who spoke of her as "a nice-looking woman, rather petite with dark hair and dark eyes, neat and very bright."[8] MacKenzie had been employed as a tutor for Charles Ives's nephew, Moss White Ives, since 1920; he and Ives established a long-lasting friendship, and he had met Mollie in 1921. However, his reminiscence dates from a half-century later, when Vivian Perlis interviewed him in 1971. The only other description—for want of a better word—is Kirkpatrick's second-hand characterization of her as "a small but intense focus of energy and determination."[9]

Second, there appear to be two extant letters in Mollie's hand, which are rendered in bold in the Appendix. The first dates from 22 August 1889 and is an addendum to a letter addressed by Charles to his father (see Fig. 2). The second letter was written almost exactly a year later and was again enclosed with a letter from Charles to his father (see Fig. 3). Although this letter has previously been attributed to Aunt Amelia, the handwriting is identical to that shown in Figure 2, and the signature quite clearly reads "Mollie" rather than "Millie."

In a later letter, dated 4 October 1893, Charles complains about his mother's handwriting: "I wish you would please get somebody else to write [them] as I can hardly make them out."[10] However, there is nothing in the extant examples of Mollie's handwriting—nor, it should be pointed out, in any other of Charles's letters—to justify this complaint.

The third matter of note in the collation is that despite occasional remarks concerning Mollie's health in the letters of both George and Charles, none of them is categorically serious. Two letters, dated 10 December 1893 and 28 September 1894, mention Mollie's having a cold.[11] Two other references are at best ambiguously worded. Thus, in Charles's letter to his father dated 20 August 1889, it is not clear whether it is Mollie or Aunt Milly who is "not very well";[12] and perhaps even more significantly, the well-known letter from George to Charles, dated 28 September 1894, can be read in two quite different ways. After noting that "Your mother and

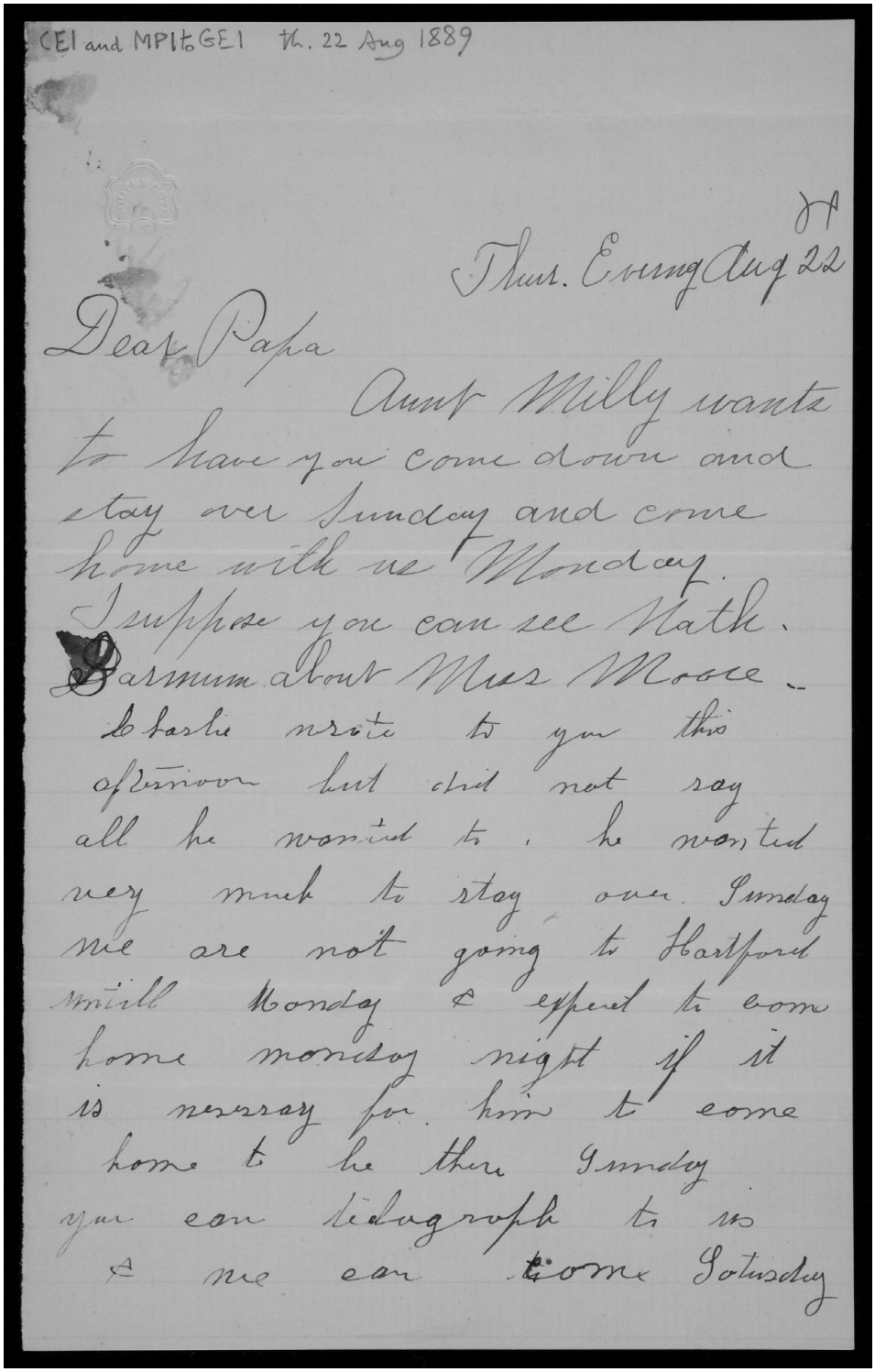
[8] On T. Findlay MacKenzie, see Perlis, *Charles Ives Remembered,* 93–95.

[9] Kirkpatrick, *Ives: Memos,* 247.

[10] See Tom C. Owens, ed., *Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), letter no. 13; see also Appendix.

[11] See ibid., letters nos. 17 and 31; see also Appendix.

[12] See ibid., letter no. 4; see also Appendix.


CEI and MPI to GEI Th. 22 Aug 1889

Thur. Evening Aug 22

Dear Papa

Aunt Milly wants to have you come down and stay over Sunday and come home with us Monday. I suppose you can see Nath. Barnum about Mrs Moore.

Charlie wrote to you this afternoon but did not say all he wanted to. he wanted very much to stay over Sunday we are not going to Hartford until Monday & expect to come home monday night if it is necessary for him to come home to be there Sunday you can telegraph to us & we can come Saturday

Figure 2. Letter to George Ives, written by Charles Ives and Mollie Ives, 22 August 1889. The Charles Ives Papers, subseries IIIA, box 33, folder 1. Reproduced by permission of The American Academy of Arts and Letters, copyright owner.

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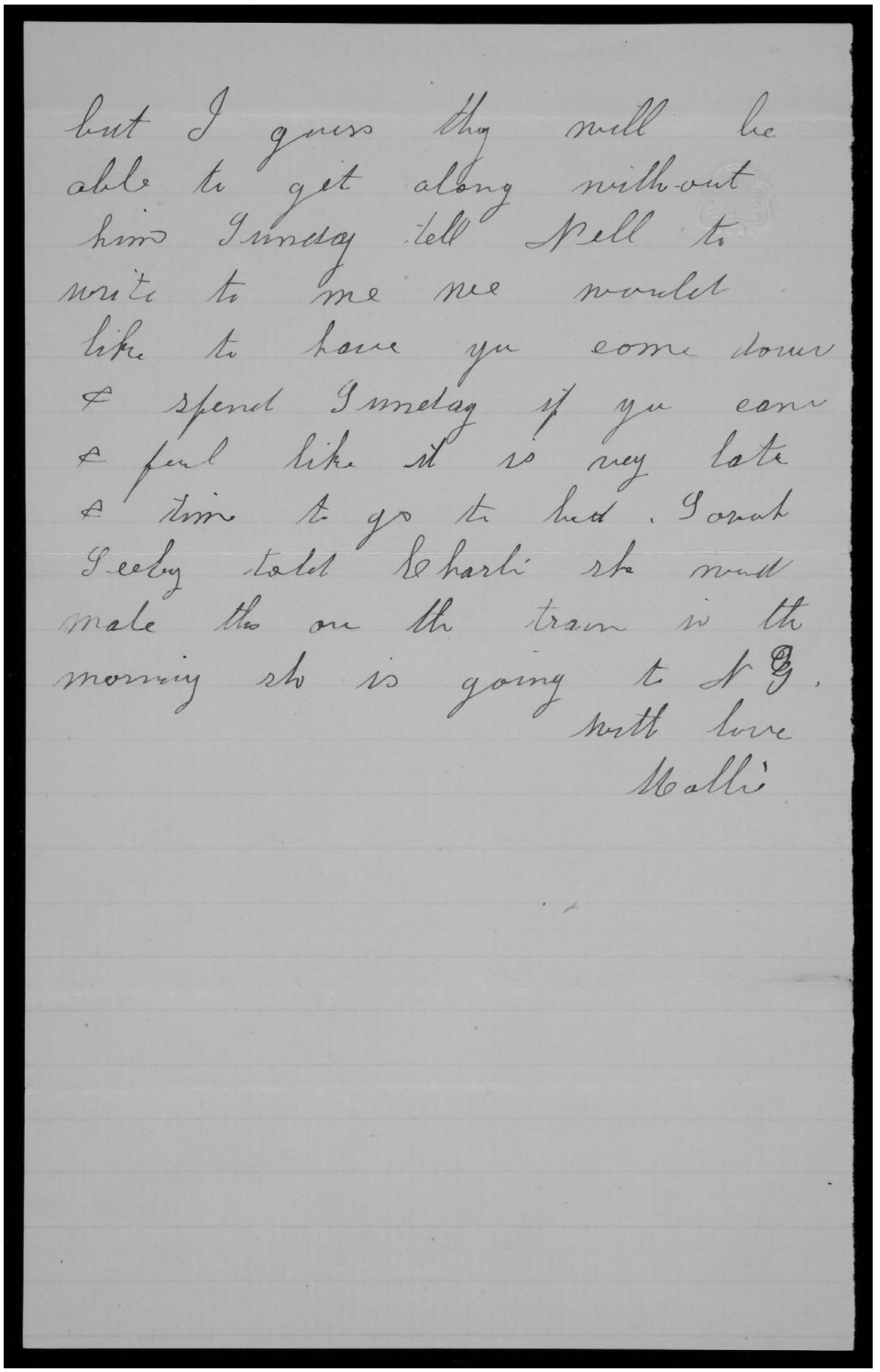

but I guess they will be
able to get along without
him Sunday tell Nell to
write to me we would
like to have you come down
& spend Sunday if you come
& feel like it is my late
& time to go to bed. Grat
Seeley told Charlie she would
make the one the train in the
morning she is going to N Y.
with love
Mattie

Figure 2. Continued.

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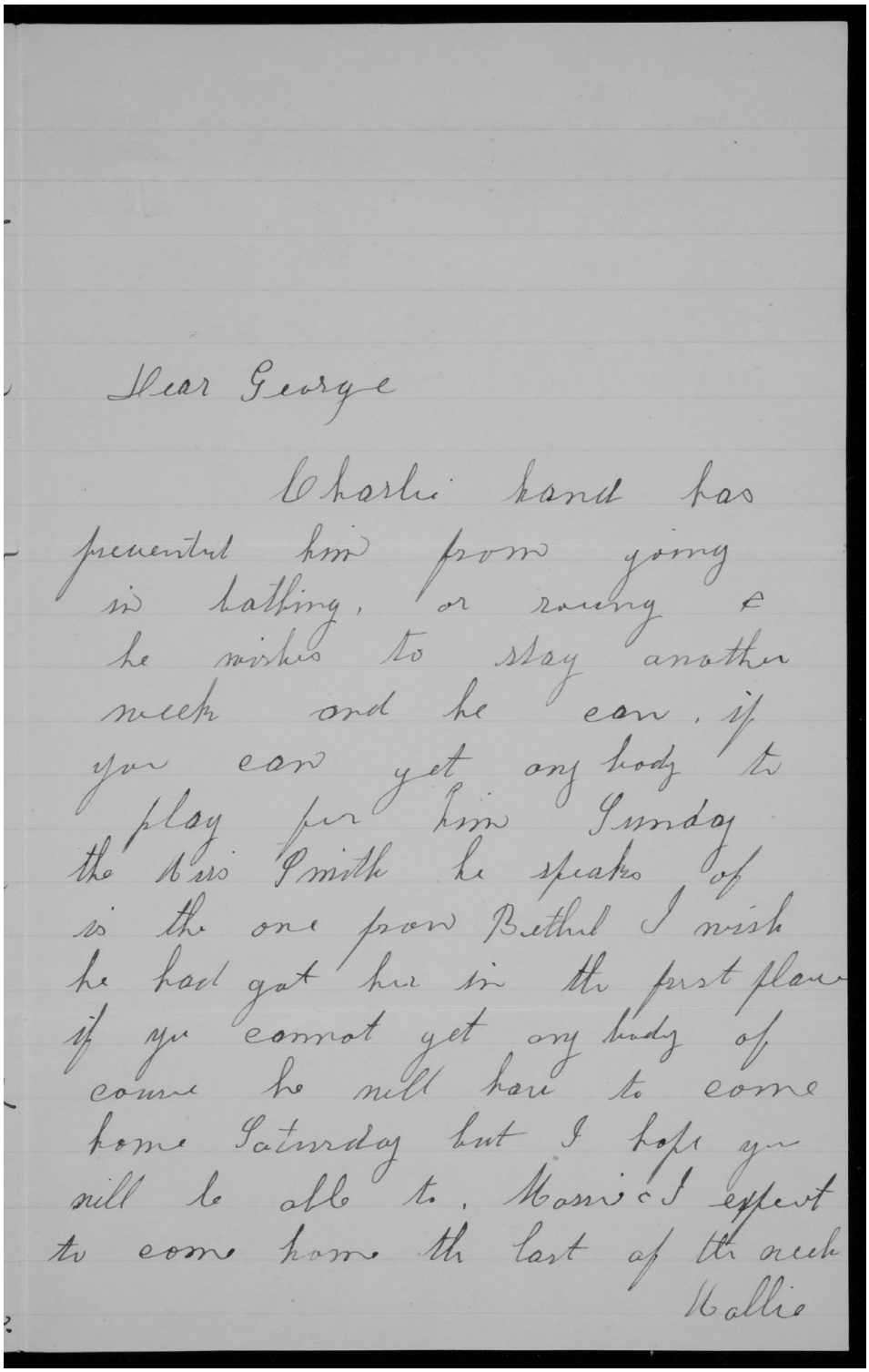

Dear George

Charlie hand has prevented him from going in bathing, or rowing & he wishes to stay another week and he can, if you can get any body to play for him Sunday the Mrs Smith he speaks of is the one from Bethel I wish he had got her in the first place if you cannot get any body of course he will have to come home Saturday but I hope you will be able to. Mamie I expect to come home the last of the week

Mollie

Figure 3. Excerpt from letter to George Ives, written by [Charles Ives and] Mollie Ives, 19 August 1890. The Charles Ives Papers, subseries IIIA, box 33, folder 1. Reproduced by permission of The American Academy of Arts and Letters, copyright owner. See also Tom C. Owens, ed., *Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), letter no. 6, where the excerpt is attributed to Amelia Brewster.

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Moss each have colds," George starts a new sentence: "Mother has another new nurse, quite a young girl but starts off well." This statement can—and has until now—been interpreted as meaning that *Mollie* has a new nurse; but by "Mother" George could just as easily have meant his *own* mother—Charles's grandmother—Sara Hotchkiss Wilcox Ives, who approximately eight months earlier had had an accident of some kind, and who was by this time in her late eighties.[13]

The final matter of note is the general tone of almost all of the references contained in the Appendix: With the exception of those instances discussed above, there is nothing here to suggest any kind of medical invalidity, mental deterioration, or even the "social exclusion" at which Feder hints. Mollie goes about her business, pickling pears, attending to her son's domestic needs, visiting him at college and—after his marriage—in his home. Indeed, the only solid piece of evidence for her supposed "condition" is that when the Ives house was being moved in 1924, she made the somewhat odd decision to stay inside it. By 1924, however, Mollie was in her mid-seventies, and the individual being discussed here is the presumably rather stubborn woman who, according to family legend, had once stopped a commuter train in its tracks.[14] If further evidence of Mollie's apparent good health in later life were needed, it seems to be provided by the photograph shown in Figure 4.

No date accompanies this photograph, but the graying hair and fuller face suggest a person of at least middle age. A clue of sorts is seen in the background, though: The building behind Mollie is the converted barn in which she lived from approximately 1890 through 1918. The barn stood farther up the hill from the main Ives house—which had its own garden—and was located at 10 Chapel Place. A notice board, possibly for the chapel in question, can be partially seen on the left of the picture. A very rough estimate for the date of the picture would therefore be 1915, when Mollie was 65, though this assumption could well be some way off the mark.

Was there, then, anything "wrong" with Mollie Ives? The answer, based on an examination of the extant evidence, would seem to be no; but by one of those supreme ironies that only exist in fact rather than fiction, there *was* in fact something very seriously wrong with her. That no one has previously noticed is a further irony, not least given that the information is publicly available and has probably been examined by several Ives scholars, most notably Stuart Feder. In January 1931, Charles Ives—who was by that time suffering badly from the effects of diabetes—was referred to the pioneering Joslin Clinic in Boston; as a result of that referral, he became one of the earliest diabetics to be treated with insulin. At Ives's first consultation, on 26 January 1931, his consultant took a full medical history (see Fig. 5).

Those who have previously examined this document have, not altogether surprisingly, concentrated on the information it contains concerning Ives's health: The record details his broken nose, received during a sports event at Yale; his two major physical collapses, of 1906 and 1918; his height (5′ 9½″), his weight (160 pounds), and his blood pressure (a perfectly healthy 150/85); the dosages of insulin he was

[13] See ibid., letter no. 31; see also Appendix. For Sara Hotchkiss Wilcox Ives's accident, see the Charles Ives Papers, subseries IIIA, box 33, folder 1, letter from Charles Ives to George Ives, dated 14 January 1894. See also Appendix.

[14] See Kirkpatrick, *Ives: Memos,* 247.

Figure 4. Mollie Ives in later life. Photo no. 30, The Charles Ives Papers, MSS 14. Irving S. Gilmore Music Library, Yale University.

prescribed; and—added subsequently—the circumstances of his death in 1954. But what the record also reveals, in its uppermost portion, is that Ives's father, George, died from apoplexy—a statement fully in accordance with the known details of George's symptoms immediately prior to his passing—and that his mother, Mollie,

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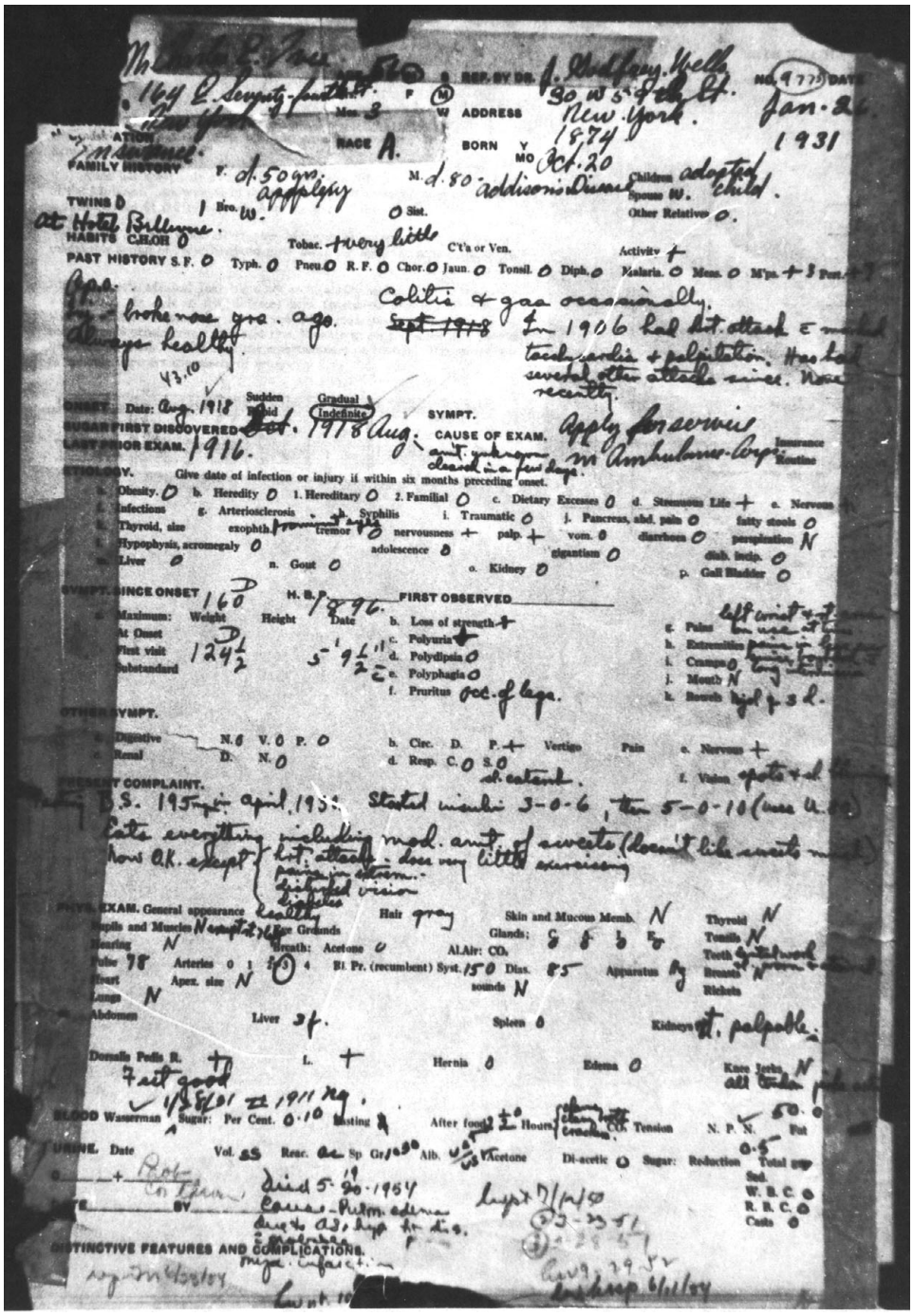

Figure 5. Charles Ives's medical record from the Joslin Clinic, Boston. The Charles Ives Papers, subseries IIIC, box 39, folder 1. Reproduced by permission of The American Academy of Arts and Letters, copyright owner.

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died as a result of Addison's disease. (Given that her passing had been only two years earlier, there is no reason to doubt the veracity this statement.)[15]

For those unfamiliar with Addison's disease, a brief clinical diversion is necessary. The syndrome was first described in 1855 by Thomas Addison, a colleague of Thomas Hodgkin at Guy's Hospital in London. It is a rare condition, more common in women than men, and results from the failure of the adrenal gland to produce sufficient amounts of steroid hormones. It may develop in children as well as adults and may reflect a number of underlying causes, including tuberculosis. (Given that the latter was endemic among the urban poor in the nineteenth century, it is entirely plausible that Mollie may have contracted, or at least been exposed to, the disease in her early years.) The symptoms associated with Addison's disease gradually accumulate, often over considerable periods of time;[16] typically, they include chronic, worsening fatigue; muscle weakness and spasms; loss of appetite and weight; nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea; headaches and sweating; changes in mood and personality, including irritability and depression; low blood pressure, which can cause dizziness and fainting; and skin changes such as hyperpigmentation. A particularly nasty feature of the disease occurs when the adrenal insufficiency is severe: In a so-called Addisonian crisis the sufferer may experience deep pains in the legs, lower back, and abdomen; severe vomiting and diarrhea, leading to dehydration; dangerously low blood pressure; loss of consciousness; hypoglycemia; confusion and psychosis; severe lethargy; and convulsions and fever. Left untreated, an Addisonian crisis can be fatal.

Nowadays, Addison's disease can be controlled fairly successfully using hydrocortisone tablets, and even Addisonian crises can be averted if dealt with swiftly. Hydrocortisone was developed only during the 1940s, however, and so Mollie Ives—assuming she was even aware of her condition—would have had to rely on more traditional (and relatively ineffective) methods of controlling her symptoms: rest, principally, and the intake of saline and dextrose fluids to counteract dehydration. Note also that whereas many women with the disease are able to bear children without complication, pregnancy is a time when particular caution needs to be exercised. Notwithstanding all of these negative points, Addison's sufferers often lead fairly normal lives—for instance, John F. Kennedy coped pretty well with the demands of the U.S. presidency despite having Addison's.

To return, then, to the evidence cited earlier concerning what Stuart Feder characterized as Mollie Ives's "invalidity," it should be clear that most (if not all) of her alleged symptoms might well be attributed to Addison's disease. The tendency toward periods of muscle weakness could explain Charles's complaints in 1893 concerning his mother's handwriting, even though those complaints are never repeated elsewhere or borne out by the extant letters in her hand; the two ambiguous references to health matters detailed in family correspondence may well refer, after all, to Mollie, rather than Aunt Amelia or Grandmother Ives, as Mollie would

[15] Note, however, that George Ives is credited as having died aged 50 (*recte* 49) and Mollie Ives aged 80 (*recte* 79), perhaps as a result of "medical shorthand"; see also note 6 above.

[16] For details of Addison's disease and its symptoms, see, for instance, such Web sites as http://www.addisons.org.uk/info/diagnosis/page1.html and http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/addisonsdisease/DS00361/DSECTION = symptoms.

certainly have experienced periods of feeling unwell and during Addisonian crises would assuredly have required nursing. Mollie's unwillingness to leave the Ives house during its removal to Chapel Place in 1924 could be as attributable to her Addisonian symptoms as to her stubbornness, and it is worth remembering that during the period of the move Charles, according to Philip Sunderland, "wanted everybody to realize that she was to be treated well." Similarly, when George and baby Charles were dispatched to the old barn when Mollie was pregnant with Moss—because "Mollie didn't want too much confusion"—this would be entirely consistent with the Addisonian tendency for symptoms to increase at times of stress and for the consequent clinical need to exercise caution.[17] Finally, think of Findlay MacKenzie's 1921 description of Mollie as having "dark eyes" and look again at the early photograph shown as Figure 1: Could those dark patches around her eyes be attributable to the Addisonian tendency toward hyperpigmentation?

At the beginning of this article, it was noted how little we know of (or care about) the vast majority of composers' parents; subsequently, the notion that Mollie Ives was "the unanswered question of her son's biography" was queried. Having examined the evidence afresh, the truth of the matter—at least to my mind—is that Mollie was no more, nor no less, unusual than Signor Rossini, Madame Debussy, or Herr Stockhausen. Rather, she was a perfectly ordinary human being, but one who had the great misfortune to suffer from Addison's disease.

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Appendix: Collated References to Mollie Ives in the Extant Ives Literature

In Vivian Perlis, *Charles Ives Remembered: An Oral History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974)

[17] See Perlis, *Charles Ives Remembered,* 7.

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When George married, he and Mollie lived in the house in the large bedroom over the south parlor. . . . Charlie and Moss were born in the house. When Moss was coming, Mollie didn't want too much confusion, so George had to go up to the barn to practice the violin. . . . In 1879, Aunt Amelia wanted to come back to the Ives house to live, and what Aunt Amelia wanted, she usually got. So George and Mollie with Charlie and Moss, moved out to Stevens Street to a home of their own. A few years later, they moved to the house on Chapel Place, which was made over out of the barn of the old house.

[Amelia Van Wyck, 6–8]

We were moving the Ives house in order to build the Danbury National Bank, of which I was the architect. Charles Ives's mother lived in the house while it was being moved. And he [CEI] came up to see me and tell me he hoped I'd look after her. Incidentally, he gave me a check for $2,500 to pay the bills. . . . Mother Ives stayed in the house while it was being moved, at great inconvenience. We did the best we could for her. After it was on its foundations and reestablished, she had changes made in the house. The bank had me look after that. That was 1924. . . . Ives came before we moved the house, and while we were moving it, and he came while we were altering it. He used to come to see his mother. He seemed to be very careful of her and wanted everybody to realize that she was to be treated well.

[Philip Sunderland, 14–16]

Uncle Charlie was extremely fond of his mother, and there was a great bond between them. I hardly believe there was another mother that could have been prouder of her son than Grandmother Ives. She would constantly remind all of us of his genius. She convinced herself that he was one, and she thought of her husband in the same way. She'd usually start talking about Grandfather Ives and tell us how he pioneered in music and how impressed he was with Uncle Charlie's musical promise; how Uncle Charlie had stayed with music, and how she was even more proud of that than of his business accomplishments.

[Brewster Ives, 72]

Uncle Charlie respected his mother, although he felt that she couldn't really understand what he was doing. But one time he said that when he was at Yale, he wanted to go out for football, and she encouraged him not to do it, because he wanted to play the organ and she said he'd hurt his fingers.

[Chester Ives, 88]

I met Mr. Ives's mother in Danbury in 1921, during that time I was recuperating in Redding. Mr. Ives and I drove up to Danbury in the car one day. She was a nice-looking woman, rather petite with dark hair and dark eyes, neat and very bright. She was very pleased to see us.

[T. Findlay MacKenzie, 93]

In John Kirkpatrick, ed., *Charles E. Ives: Memos*
(New York: W. W. Norton, 1972)

Editorial note by JK:
Memo on ms [of *Slow March*]: "Found by mother in mss. [in the] cellar, May 16, 1921."

[176]

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Appendix 13, by JK: "George Edward Ives (1845–1894) and his family":
On New Year's Day 1874, George married Mary Elizabeth Parmelee (1849–1929), daughter of Noah David Parmelee, a farmer in Bethel (adjoining Danbury to the southeast), and Mary Ann Smith, a locally prominent choir singer. Charles Edward was born that October, and Joseph Moss II in February 1876. When Moss was just a baby, George used to practice violin in the barn up the lane (now Chapel Place) and take Charlie with him, who would sit in the buggy and wave the whip in time with the music. Later their mother's nephews, Paul and Sam Parmelee, to whom she was "Aunt Mollie," were among their playmates.

In later years Ives talked and wrote so devotedly about his father than one tends hardly to notice his mother. Though unimaginative beyond household duties, she was a small but intense focus of energy and determination. The story is still told of her wanting to take a train to New York from Brewster (8 miles west of Danbury), where it wasn't scheduled to stop—so she flagged it and it stopped. . . .

After Uncle Lyman died, Mollie's sister, Miss Lucy Cornelia Parmelee ("Aunt Nell," 1852–1939) came to live with Aunt Amelia in the old house. And when Aunt Amelia died in 1918, she bequeathed a lifetime use of the house to Aunt Nell, who was joined by Mollie and by Mrs. Abbott Foster, née Sarah White (Col. Nelson White's daughter, "Cousin Sazy").

When the Danbury National Bank (now the Fairfield County Trust Co.) acquired the site of the old house in 1923, everyone assumed it would be razed, but Ives insisted it be moved uphill on Chapel Place. He asked Philip Sunderland to take charge, gave him a large check, and told him to ask for more if needed, and to "take good care of Mother," who stayed in the house while it was being moved.

[247–49]

References in family correspondence, etc.
[SEL = Tom C. Owens, ed., *Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), letter number]
[CIP = unpublished item in The Charles Ives Papers, box and folder number]
[CEI = Charles; GEI = George; HTI = Harmony Twichell Ives; MPI = Mollie]

(quotations in bold appear to be written by Mollie and are presumably in her hand)

25 May 1886; CEI to Aunt Milly [Amelia Brewster] [CIP 33/1]
Mamma + Papa + Moss are all well and so am I.

18 July 1886; CEI to GEI [SEL #2]
Mamma received your letter last night. . . . Mama [*sic*] is going to write you ~~this morning~~> to morrow.

1886–1889; various letters from CEI mentioning GEI and MPI in domestic roles [CIP 33/1]
e.g., Mollie pickling pears and peaches; George fixing doors and windows.

14 August 1889; CEI to GEI [SEL #3]
Mamma wants to have you give $1 to the Parmelees to give milkman Elwell to whom she owes.

20 August 1889; CEI to GEI [SEL #4]
Mamma wants to go home Friday, but Aunt Milly wants her to stay because she [Milly or Mollie?] is not very well but she wants to go home where she will have more to do. . . . All the folks but Mamma want to have me stay as I am studying . . .

22 August 1889; MPI to GEI [CIP 33/1]
Charlie wrote to you this afternoon but did not say all he wanted to. he wanted very much to stay over Sunday We are not going to Hartford until Monday & expect to come home Monday night if it is [necessary] for him to come home to be there Sunday you can telegraph to us & he can come Saturday but I guess they will be able to get along without him Sunday tell Nell to write to me we would like to have you come down & spend Sunday if you can & feel like it is very late & time to go to bed. [Sarah Seely] told Charlie she must make the one th[rough?] train in the morning she is going to ?N[ew] ?Y[ork].
With love Mollie

27 August 1889; CEI to Sarah H. Ives [SEL #5]
Mamma went to Grandma Parmelee's to supper

19 August 1890; MPI to GEI [SEL #6, where it is attributed to Amelia Brewster]
Dear George
Charlie's hand has prevented him from going in bathing, or rowing & he wishes to stay another week and he can, if you can get any body to play for him Sunday the Miss Smith he speaks of is the one from Bethel I wish he had got her in the first place if you cannot get any body of course he will have to come home Saturday but I hope you will be able to. Mossie & I expect to come home the last of the week
Mollie

5 July 1893; CEI to GEI [SEL #9]
When does [*sic*] mother and Moss expect to come to Westbrook?

20 August 1893; CEI to MPI [CIP 33/1]
[letter from hotel in Milwaukee; CEI accompanying Lyman Brewster to World's Fair in Chicago; is writing to her because he's not with her]

27 September 1893; CEI to MPI [CIP 33/1]
[acknowledges letters from her and Moss; no mention of handwriting problems]

4 October 1893; CEI to MPI [SEL #13]
Dear Mother
Your letter just rec'd . . . [content entirely domestic] . . . Please send this etc. as soon as possible.
Yours truly C.
P.S. I wish you would please get somebody else to write your letters as I can hardly make them out.

11 November 1893; CEI to GEI [CIP 33/1]
I will meet mother at the room [in New Haven] after 1.30. I can't think of anything, that she needs to bring . . .
. . . PS. If anybody is coming with her, have them come up to the room too.

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3 December 1893; CEI to GEI [SEL #16]
Please tell mother I bought my shoes and found my other glove have paid both bills, and will send receipt. Is Grandmother better Give my love to all . . .

10 December 1893; CEI to GEI [SEL #17]
Hope mother's cold is better.

14 January 1894; CEI to GEI [CIP 33/1]
[Inquires after grandmother, who has had an accident; laundry questions for Mollie]

11 February 1894; CEI to GEI [SEL #19]
Please ask mother if she has any pair of black pants that I could wear for the rest of the winter as these are so shiny. If she sends any, ask her to put a big crease in them

22 March 1894; CEI to MPI [CIP 33/1]
I rec'd your letter yesterday . . . [deals with arrangements for forthcoming vacation and mentions that he has invited his friend Garrison back to Danbury]

29 April 1894; CEI to GEI [SEL #25]
Dear Father
I suppose Mother and Moss arrived from Stamford last evening, and told you about their Stamford visit etc . . . [where they had watched CEI play in a baseball game] . . . Give my love to Mother and all. Please ask them to send clothes as soon as possible . . .

28 September 1894; GEI to CEI [SEL #31]
Your mother and Moss each have colds. Mother [MPI or grandmother Ives?] has another nurse, quite a young girl but starts off well . . .

2 October 1894; CEI to MPI [CIP 33/1]
[solely concerned with domestic needs at Yale]

20 January 1895; CEI to MPI [SEL #35]
[solely concerned with domestic and academic matters at Yale]

8 April 1895; CEI to MPI [CIP 33/1]
[solely concerned with domestic and academic matters at Yale]

9 June 1908; "Our Book" [CIP 45/7]
[CEI and HTI marry; Mollie is in attendance, but does not appear in any of the photographs]

7 July 1908; "Our Book" [CIP 45/7]
[CEI and HTI have moved into their new home at 70 W 11 St, NYC; their first guests are Mollie and Moss, who come to lunch]

18 March 1909; "Our Book" [CIP 45/7]
[Mollie visits CEI and HTI for a week]

New Year's Day 1922; "Our Book" [CIP 45/7]
[CEI and HTI are in Danbury: they mention being with Aunt Nell, Mother Ives [i.e., Mollie], Dave and Ella [Twichell]