



U.S. Patent July 29 1868 N.Y.

Office of  
**JAMES SOUTHWATE**  
GENERAL  
**LIFE, FIRE INS.**  
AND  
**COMMISSION AGENT.**



Durham, N.C. Nov 20th 1881

My dear Matt:

Your last and only letter to me since your departure for Staunton has been so long neglected that I am almost ashamed to attempt a reply. However, the old saying: "Better late than never" will have to hold good in this case. You did try to be more punctual in future. I was gratified at your grading in the report which came to hand several days ago - It showed more diligence than the ones you received at Staunton the 1st session - but still there is room for improvement and I hope you will be faithful to your trust and rapidly improve with each succeeding day.

Try to master one idea, if no more, in each study at each recitation and it will not take long to secure that mental vigor and training which will

put in your hands the necessary im-  
plements for working out and building  
a superior intellectual edifice—

Nothing short of hard, earnest work  
will satisfy yourself and comfort your  
parents, in the end. In the letters  
you write home from time to time

I note that your spelling has improved  
and your mode of expressing seems  
easier— Practice will be of untold  
assistance to you and I would suggest  
that you write often, cultivating the  
powers of description, relating incidents  
of school life &c, letting this come in  
as a kind of extra study— I also note that  
you are much addicted to underlining  
your words. This will never do.

When you underline a word other than  
one in a foreign language you at  
once accuse the person to whom you  
are writing, of not being able to tell  
emphatic words in a sentence, without  
they are pointed out. You also by  
this mode confess to a faulty construction.



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Durham, N.C.

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I am sure you will profit by not under-  
 lying any word except it be in a foreign  
 language. Be enthusiastic in Rhetoric,  
 Music, Elocution & Calisthenics and  
 you can never regret it.

I appreciate the photo-enclosure  
 in your letter and am glad to know  
 you have a room-mate better looking  
 than yourself. I expect the looking  
 glasses in that Cabin have a hard  
 time - You must present my com-  
 pliments and let her know that I have  
 pleasant expectations of meeting her next  
 Commencement.

The Conference is well  
 high upon us and for the present week  
 we will be almost overrun if not  
 quite - We are well supplied though  
 with provisions - turkeys, chickens,  
 Oyster, Pickles, Cakes - almost a

thing you can mention in the  
coming line - We will take care  
of Eight & perhaps ten persons.

After conference I may  
go to Atlanta Ga - to attend for a few  
days the Exhibition - Should I do  
so, I will write you a full account  
of my trip - I may call to see  
Uncle Tom, Cousin Sal & all my  
Cousins in Columbus.

About two months ago we sent you  
a little Coat or Jacket by mail and  
have never heard whether or not you  
received it - Write about it in your  
next - I enclose \$5.00 that I happen  
to have in my pocket - Will send some  
money to you occasionally when I can  
think of it - With much love & best

wishes, Yr devoted brother,

J. H. Smith etc.