Newhez, Jan. 23rd, 1854

To the Rev. the Superior of the Congr. of the Holy Cross

Very Rev. Sir,

Last Summer in Pittsburgh, I said a few words to the Rev. Mr. Carrier of your congregation, about the probability of success if applied to you to establish a School at Pittsburgh. He told me that he was not in your Province, as I said nothing further. But indeed the interests of Religion are so much concerned in the question, that I cannot but beg you to reflect upon it. It seems to me a difficulty which there must be a way to overcome, and perhaps an easy way, if you only understood how much benefit would be derived to Religion by such an institution at this point. There is not a College between New Orleans and Cape Girardeau where the Rev. Mr. Carrier lives, nor any a point on the Mississippi, where Catholic parents can send their children to have their education. I have heard that you have a thought of establishing one at Memphis, but I should be very glad if that were done, but that would not make a very material difference. There would still be two thousand miles of the River without a Catholic College—helping through a country from which students have often been sent as far as the city of Georgetown, for the benefit of Catholic discipline, by Protestant parents. A few years ago, I counted in the catalogue of the Academy in Kentucky, the names of 57 young ladies from the Mississippi, almost all of them Protestants. Whatever the result of this war may be, Catholic education...
will be in greater demand than ever before. If the Confederacy should establish its independence, parents will not send their children north for their education. If the Federal Government should be restored, the change in the condition of the negroes, or the other changes resulted by the war, will increase the white population of the industrial class, consisting largely of Catholics, desiring the advantage of the country, in needing education for their children.

Notches has after years past been proud of its position in education. The Institute, or Public School, has been popular with the poor, is much patronized by the rich. At present it is closed for want of means. A good School established here now by you, would at once take possession of the field, if I do not suppose you would easily lose it. Our greatest want is a good Parish School, but if possible we would unite with it an Academy or College to teach the Clergy & Mathematics. We have here the germ of a Boys' Asylum—a legacy with which we purchased a small place of 30 acres on the edge of the town, & we have still some $20,000 remaining. It is however in arrears, which cannot be paid until after the war. We believe that our debtors are both able & willing to pay— but of course in war times nothing is certain. The place of the Boys' Asylum is subject to much annoyance just now, from the proximity of the Slaves, & we are looking for a much larger place of 500 or 600 acres—a few miles from town.

For our School, we are at present using the basement of the Cathedral—but we have secured a good lot immediately in front of the Cathedral—125 ft. x 100: with the privilege, of adding a piece if we desire, which would make it 125 x 139. It is in a corner of the principal streets of the town, Main St. & Union St.
We have now over a hundred boys in our schools. Your coming would at once increase the number to 150 or more. If you had a good Classical Course, I believe you would command the Protestant patronage of the town and neighborhood.

I should be glad to put all the schooling the boys here under your care, or if it was desirable to have a share of the spiritual ministry, I would not object to any arrangement which might serve the interests of religion without injuring their. The place Manawa is small, but perhaps some division of labor would be useful.

Be kind enough to write to me as early as possible, when I know what to expect. Since I wrote the above, I find in the Register of 1861, that our Province Contains all except Louisiana as we are not in Louisiana, but in Mississippi. We really fall within your limits. I beseech you then for the love of the souls redeemed through the Holy Cross, weigh well all that I have written. If you need more information, I will try to satisfy you. Now is exactly the time to do this work, before others take possession of it.

With all respect— Keeping your remembrance in the Holy Sacrifice—

Very truly, Sir,

Your humble servant in Christ,

William Henry Elder
Bishop of Ratchi.