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—From Ezra Ames' Potrait of 1826

SIMEON DEWITT (1756-1834)

Simeon DeWitt

Founder of Ithaca

By WILLIAM HEIDT, JR.
CAROL K. KAMMEN, *Editor*



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DEWITT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF TOMPKINS COUNTY, *Inc.*
ITHACA, NEW YORK 14850

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Acknowledgments

With information concerning SIMEON DEWITT so slight and so scattered, several years were spent in collecting data that indicate his devotion to Ithaca. When the project stagnated, Mrs. Kammen assumed the task of editing scores of pages of manuscript, and succeeded in restoring a forward motion that has culminated in this publication. She has the author's sincere thanks for her cooperative efforts.

W. Glenn Norris, Tompkins County Historian, scrutinized historical facts and suggested changes; Cornell Regional and History Archives and the State Historian freely lent assistance. The sum total of all the efforts, it is hoped, has produced an introduction to the *Founder of Ithaca* that may suffice until a definitive biography appears even though now it is 134 years late.—W. H. jr.

Preface

For many years WILLIAM HEIDT, JR., has devoted time to the study of Ithaca's past. He has written and produced a series of 80 pamphlets dealing with the city and Tompkins County history that have had a popular acceptance. In all productions he has been involved with the endeavor, sometimes as author, in all as editor and printer.

One topic he long considered important was a study of Simeon DeWitt and his influence on early Ithaca. Toward that end he collected material and wrote preliminary drafts. It was my good fortune as an historical researcher employed by the DeWitt Historical Society to come in contact with him. He offered me the benefit of his research and together we have developed this newest addition to the DeWitt Historical Society pamphlet series.

That Simeon DeWitt is a man deserving our attention seems obvious. Yet, he has been a figure neglected by both historians and biographers. DeWitt has not only been nearly forgotten, he has repeatedly been maligned.

It is hoped that this small offering will serve as a tribute and memorial to DeWitt. He was a man of many interests, who had a long and productive career. His innovations in the field of surveying have survived and were used as eager Americans moved westward to chart unknown areas of forests and plains. It was DeWitt who acquired the land at the head of Cayuga Lake and realized its potential. He named, planned and busied himself with small details concerning the community. Finally, it was in Ithaca that his remains were first laid to rest.

Ithaca's debt to Simeon DeWitt has only partially been acknowledged. The DeWitt Guard was once a proud unit, but it

has long been disbanded. DeWitt Junior High School is named in his honor. DeWitt Place may endure, yet this little street bears the additional sign announcing that it is *not a city street*, which seems somewhat ignoble. The First Presbyterian Church is the owner of DeWitt Park, a parcel of land bought from the DeWitt estate. It fronts the Old Courthouse, home of DeWitt Historical Society. Singularly, in a statewide survey of local historical societies, DeWitt Historical Society loses its identity with him in being listed simply as the Tompkins County Historical Society.

So, the founder and proprietor of Ithaca is projected into the future without a proper statute or biography. This, then, is an attempt to put on paper what we know about Simeon DeWitt and his contributions to our city.

The research for this study has been conducted solely in Ithaca, although it is recognized that there is additional material on DeWitt in the State Archives in Albany, in the New York Historical Society, New York City, and at the Rutgers University Library. Letters in the latter section of this pamphlet are reprints of originals found in the DeWitt Historical Society and in the Regional History Archives at Cornell University. Material from Cornell has been reprinted with the permission of Herbert Finch, Archives Director.

Funds that partially financed the editorial work have come from the New York State Council on the Arts in a grant to DeWitt Historical Society under direction of Walter Stainton, Society president.

CAROL K. KAMMEN, *Editor*

August 30, 1968
Ithaca, New York

Simeon DeWitt's Family Record

Taken from the original copy torn out of his family Bible by his son and last survivor, William Linn DeWitt, who died at Ithaca during 1903.

- 1756 December 26, Simeon DeWitt was born.
1767 January 3, Elizabeth Lynott was born.
1789 October 12, Simeon DeWitt and Elizabeth Lynott were married.
1793 December 13, Elizabeth, wife of Simeon DeWitt, died.
1760 May 18, Jane Varick was born.
1799 May 13, Simeon DeWitt and Jane Varick were married.
1800 February 6, Richard Varick, their first son, was born.
1801 February 17, George Washington, their second son, was born.
1808 April 10, Jane, wife of Simeon DeWitt, died.
1778 October 30, Susan Linn was born.
1810 October 29, Simeon DeWitt and Susan Linn were married.
1811 September 3, Susan Linn, their first daughter, was born.
1813 September 10, Cornelia, their second daughter, was born.
1814 August 2, George Washington DeWitt died.
1817 January 13, William Linn, their first son, was born.
1819 February 23, Mary Linn DeWitt was born.
1820 March 15, Cornelia DeWitt died.
1824 May 5, Susan, wife of Simeon DeWitt, died.
1834 December 3, Simeon DeWitt died.
1849 April 1, Susan Linn DeWitt (Hubbell) died.
1868 February 7, Richard Varick DeWitt died.
1871 March 20, Mary Linn DeWitt died.

—*From William Linn DeWitt's memoranda in
Cornell University Library.*

Church Memorial

On the south wall of St. Catharine's Church, formerly the Congregational Church, at West Seneca and North Geneva Streets, is a tablet of historical interest. Of polished Wisconsin marble, six by five feet in size, it was erected by the congregation "to show their unity of life and purpose, whether under the Dutch Reformed or Congregational name."

Its inscription reads:

TO THE GLORY OF ALMIGHTY GOD

*And in Memory of all who in this
Cayuga Lake Valley have co-worked with Him:
the Indians of the Iroquois Confederacy,
the First Unknown White Explorers,
the French Jesuit Missionaries, 1656 - 1684,
the Continentals in Sullivan's Expedition, 1779,
the Envoys, Travelers and Men of Science,
the First Settlers of this place, 1789,*

☆ 1756

SIMEON DEWITT

1834 ☆

*Founder of the City of Ithaca
who gave the ground on which this edifice stands,
the Pastors, Officers and Members
of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church,
organized April 2nd, 1830.*

The Early Years

SIMEON DEWITT, proprietary founder of Ithaca, was born on Christmas Day, 1756, in the small Ulster County village of Wawarsing.

The first immigrant bearing the name to appear in the New World was Tjerck Claesen DeWitt who came to New Netherland in 1656, eight years before the end of Dutch rule along the Hudson. In April of that year the registers of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York City record the marriage of "Tjerck Claesen DeWitt van Groothold en Zenderland" to "Barbara Andriesson van Amsterdam." Tjerck's first child was born early the following year. About 1660 or 1661 Tjerck removed his family to Beverwyck, now Albany. In 1669-70 Governor Francis Lovelace granted him permission to "erect a house and barne with convenient outhouses for his cattle upon his own land at Esopus, lying between Hurley and Kingston." The house that Tjerck DeWitt built still stands, its south wing dating from about 1670. Successive generations have added to the original structure.

Andries was the eldest of Tjerck's thirteen children. In 1682 he married Jannetje Egbertsen and moved with her to a farm in Marbletown, Ulster County, which his father had given them. They remained there some twenty years, but prior to 1708 moved to Kingston.

Egbert DeWitt was the tenth of Andries' children. In 1726, at the age of twenty-five, he married Mary Nottingham. They went to the western part of Ulster County and settled near Napanoch, a former Indian site near Wawarsing.

Egbert and his wife became parents of ten children, nine of them boys. The one girl, Mary, married a distinguished member of a family that would become as prominent in New York

as her own. Her husband, Gen. James Clinton, became a central figure in New York's resistance to the British invasion during the Revolutionary War. His brother was New York's governor both before and after independence. The Clintons had four sons, the third, born in 1769, carried both family names, and lived to serve his state and country in the latter part of the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth century. He was DeWitt Clinton, a United States senator and farsighted governor of his native state.

Two of Egbert's grandsons, cousins of Simeon and Moses DeWitt, also achieved fame. Moses, son of Jacob DeWitt, was born in 1772. It is recorded of Moses that he was "in person large and well favored, very social and agreeable in his manner and conversation. The Indians esteemed him highly, and when he died deeply lamented his death. This speaks a thousand words in his favor, for one man like this in a new settlement surrounded by Indians, liable to be excited and provoked to revenge and murder by the least and unintended injury, was like a garment to the settlement which covered up a multitude of their offences against them."

Local historians have long asserted that Moses DeWitt was his cousin's agent in Ithaca. Simeon did write to him, asking that Moses conduct a survey of the land at the base of Lake Cayuga. (See letter number one). Moses, however, died in Onondaga County in 1794, where he resided after the military survey and before he reached Ithaca. The Onondaga town of DeWitt was named for him.

Prior to his death, Moses was appointed an assistant surveyor to Simeon. While the surveyor general remained in Albany to deal with problems of the over-all survey of the military tract, Moses and his colleague, Abraham Hardenberg, drew up the new townsites and outlined the individual plots.

Andries DeWitt, father of Simeon, became a doctor and settled in Wawarsing village, a farming community some fourteen miles from present-day Accord. He married Jannetje Ver-nooy, daughter of an Ulster County millowner. They had several children, most notable of whom was Simeon, a talented boy. Although the family was of modest economic means, efforts were made to insure him a good education.

When the Rev. Dirck Romeyn was ordained in 1766 he took charge of the Wawarsing, Marbletown and Rochester parishes of the Dutch Reformed Church, and assumed direction of Simeon's education. Romeyn has been described as "unquestionably the first man in our Church, in his day, and among the first in the entire American Church." In 1775 Romeyn moved to Hackensack, New Jersey, where he remained until 1784. While there he was outspoken in his defense of the patriots' stand against the British. In 1785 Romeyn moved again, this time to Schenectady where he was instrumental in the founding and direction of Union College.

Simeon also went to New Jersey to attend a relatively new school, Queen's College, now Rutgers's University, located in New Brunswick. It had been established in 1766 by the Dutch Reformed Church, with a curriculum patterned after that of the College of New Jersey, later Princeton University, where the Queen's tutors had studied. Lower classes studied Greek, Latin, arithmetic and geometry. The upper grades concentrated on geography, natural philosophy, mathematics, logic and grammar. The tuition was twenty shillings upon admission and four pounds a year.

At Rutgers, DeWitt seems to have had a pleasant and close relationship with his fellow students, who had numbered 20 in 1774. DeWitt became a member of the Athenian Society, a weekly literary-debate group. Studies, however, were interrupted in 1776 when the British forces under General Gage landed at Sandy Hook and marched to secure New Brunswick. The able-bodied students hastily formed a militia to repel the enemy, but were disbanded when the British occupied the town. An entry in the Athenian Society Journal reads:

"The Members of the Athenian Society, still inspired by Patriotism, and zealous to promote the interests of America, leaving their peaceable abodes, again assisted their Countrymen to repel an Enemy endeavoring to establish a system of Tyranny and Oppression."

DeWitt returned home to Wawarsing and attempted to continue his studies alone. Despite the interruption of his education, Queens awarded him his Bachelor of Arts diploma. Twelve years later Rutgers University was to honor him with

a Master of Arts degree in recognition of his service to the colonies during the war.

A group of letters written by DeWitt from 1776 to 1778 has survived. To John Bogart, a Queens student, DeWitt in August 1776 laments:

“I am now going to acquaint You that I am left quite disconsolate, forsaken by all my pleasant companions. Mr. Taylor also is gone, he marched last Wednesday & if it was not for the *Dear creatures* in Town I would become entirely Melancholy.”

In a postscript he added, “Today we had our general Muster. One half of the Militia were Drafted among Whom fell the lot of me and Dad. Orders are to be ready to March next Tuesday. . . .”

In a letter of October 1776 DeWitt continued in the same vein to Bogart:

“If I had now some talkative female to instruct me I might write you an Epistle as long as my arm but would not venture to recommend it for sense. . . . nothing employs my attention more than the Pretty Girls.”

DeWitt’s comments about one young lady in particular are humorous:

“The other day I happened to cast my eye about and perceived a female form at a distance variegated with Silks and Lawns and gawze & near a Bushel of ruffled stuf composed the superstructure. The least motion of her body discovered some affected gracefulness & I know not how. . . . Upon second consideration I determined to take a nearer View. I accordingly advanced towards the heavenly Object. . . . The first thing that presented itself was the meeting of her nose and Chin at half distances and a ghastly grin between. At second glance her Eyes glared direct upon me like the reflection of light from two opaque balls of glass. Her cheeks were drawn outwards and her forehead gathered into wrinkles. I turned About. . . .”

New York was then being threatened by the British in the north and the Indians in the western parts. In the Ulster County Town of Rochester, Andries DeWitt was made chairman of the local Committee of Safety, and both he and his son Simeon signed the Articles of Association as approved by the New York State Committee.

In 1777 the British forces under command of Gen. John Burgoyne invaded New York State from Canada. A unit was organized in Ulster County and young DeWitt joined at the rank of adjutant. As the regiment marched to meet the British, it was consolidated into another regiment and the twenty-one-year-old officer became unexpectedly a private! DeWitt wrote in August of that year, "I have not heard a word from any of my Brunswick friends since I left them last Dec. . . . As for myself I have done very little. I have been out with the militia last winter to Tappan. . . ."

DeWitt's regiment was present at the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga. He wrote the following letter about the battle:

"I can assure you never such a storm [as Burgoyne] threatened our state. . . . Burgoyne [sic] from the North, Sir Harry Clinton from the South, St. Leger at fort Scuyler to the Westward, and Baum at Bennington to the Eastward intended to crush us in the center. . . . But mark the changing face of affairs. St. Leger rais'd the siege, Baum was defeated, Burgoyne was taken, and Sir Harry retreated. The black thick brewing storm was spent in harmless thunder. The brave New England militia deserve to have eternal monuments erected in their honour. . . . When they [the British] surrendered the most glorious grandest sight America ever beheld or perhaps ever shall see was there to be seen, of which I had the pleasure to be a spectator. . . . I had not the pleasure to be in any of the engagements. We were, however, at the close of the last battle within shot of them. We heard a few balls whistle. All the loss our regiment sustained was one man wounded who is since well."

Shortly afterwards the unit was disbanded and DeWitt returned home to resume his studies, adding surveying to his curriculum. It was a fortuitous addition for at this time George Washington wrote Gen. James Clinton, requesting aid in locating a geographer to join the Continental Army. Clinton recommended his young nephew, Simeon DeWitt.

Simeon, then twenty-two years old, received the following letter from John Erskine, geographer-in-chief, dated June 20, 1778.

"Sir, As I have got a Commission from his Exc'y Genl.

Washington for Geographer and Surveyor to the Army, and have his permission to engage you as one of my assistants, I beg leave to inform you that your pay, in that capacity, will be two dollars per day, a horse and one ration when at camp, and travelling expenses when employed at a distance from it, which terms I have no doubt will be agreeable. I shall therefore be glad if you will come here as soon as possible to accompany me to the army, to which I propose to set out again next Friday. . . .”

DeWitt became Erskine’s assistant geographer. Once Simeon was established in his new position, he joined with his colleague Benjamin Lodge, also an assistant to Colonel Erskine, in registering a complaint about their pay, a problem, they wrote, that “only requires to be known to be redressed.” In addition they argued:

“In the present case, we are far from wishing to raise fortunes by the calamities of our Country; but at the same time we believe our Country is as far from wishing us to present our fortunes to them, along with our services, without any prospect of reimbursement, which at present is the case. Our pay, so far from supplying us with clothes, has not been adequate, for these twelve months past, to the furnishing us with shoes, and now is not sufficient for washing. . . .”

Writing to his friend John Bogart at Rutgers, he complained, “I have been cursing the mountains ever since we came to this place because they tire me so much in travelling over them. I have wore a piece off my toe in walking too much. It smarted yesterday very much but today he seems well enough. . . . I wish you would write as often as opportunities permit. I don’t get any letters from any of my old friends. I believe I am entirely forgot. If this is the case I wish you would let me know so that I may forget them too.”

Despite his complaints, DeWitt was apparently very close to his superior, for when Erskine died in 1780 DeWitt fashioned a brass plate that was attached to the casket. With the position of geographer-in-chief vacant, there was a scramble on the part of several to gain preferment for their own candidates. In response to one such request, George Washington wrote Gen. Anthony Wayne on November 22, 1780, that he felt obliged to give the office to DeWitt.

Washington then wrote to the Congress in support of his appointment of DeWitt to the vacant post. He sent his message on November 25, 1780:

“I beg leave to recommend Mr. Simeon DeWitt. His being in the department gives him a pretension, and his abilities are still better. From the character Mr. Erskine always gave of him, and from what I have seen of his performance, he seems to be extremely well qualified.”

DeWitt's appointment as geographer-in-chief was approved and at twenty-four years of age he prepared to assume his duties. In August of the following year General Washington wrote to DeWitt, sending directions about a proposed survey from Princeton, through Trenton and on to Delaware. “At the head of Elk you will receive further orders,” wrote Washington. “I need not observe to you the necessity of noting Towns, Villages, and remarkable Houses and places but I must desire that you will give me the rough traces of your Survey as you proceed on as I have reasons for desiring to know this as soon as possible.” In November of 1781 Washington wrote a similar charge to DeWitt giving precise directions.

DeWitt in turn communicated his troubles to Washington:

“I could wish to have the path for my conduct as clearly and particularly delineated as may be. . . . Business is much easier done when a man knows what latitude he may take and what support he may depend upon. . . . The articles to which Mr. Erskine thought himself entitled were four dollars and four rations a day for himself; two dollars and a ration for an assistant (tho I think it ought to have been two rations, the lowest officer in the army having as much) travelling charges when on business and as many pack horses as the business should require. Chain-bearers were to be drafted from the troops. . . . I shall be obliged to keep two saddle horses for myself and a horse for each assistant besides a four horse team and waggon to be furnished by the public.

“Since regulations have been made respecting the number of servants the officers of the army are allowed to keep it will perhaps not be amiss to mention them. Two may answer my purposes. . . . It mortifies me to see this beautifullest part of the season pass by us while we out of mere necessity remain

inactive. As long as I am not otherwise directed we may as well be engaged in extending our survey into the country . . .”

General Washington assigned DeWitt to travel with his headquarters. As part of the official entourage Major General DeWitt was with the Continental Army at Yorktown where he witnessed the surrender of Cornwallis.

George Washington wrote several other letters to DeWitt during this period. In June 1783 he gave DeWitt permission to publish a map of the State of the War in America. On November 17, 1783, Washington accepted DeWitt’s petition to resign his post as geographer to the army.

The following year Washington wrote to comment on the worthiness of DeWitt’s plan to publish a series of maps to show the causes of the Revolutionary War. He regretfully added that there was no available fund of money to finance such a project.

Referring to a memorial DeWitt had submitted to him, Washington wrote from Mount Vernon to Thomas Jefferson on March 3, 1784:

“Has not Congress received a memorial from Mr. DeWitt . . . lately geographer to the northern army? The propositions contained in the copy which he has sent me seem founded in equity; and with respect to himself, I can assure you, he is extremely modest, sensible, sober, discreet, and deserving of favors. He is esteemed a very good mathematician.”

In 1796, when George Washington was seeking a surveyor general for the young nation, he expressed regret that DeWitt was committed to his position with the State of New York, and was consequently unable to take the federal post. He noted regretfully, “As you may have heard, that Mr. DeWitt, who was geographer to the army at the close of the war, after the decease of Mr. Erskine, and at present the surveyor general of the State of New York, a man of profound knowledge in mathematics and sufficiently versed in astronomy, was nominated to that office, and has declined the acceptance of it.”

Writing to his secretary of state, Washington remarked, “I am sorry Mr. DeWitt, from the competency of his abilities to discharge the duties of surveyor general, declines accepting it.”

By this time, however, DeWitt was deeply involved with the western development of his native state.

The Public Man

The war for American independence was fought to insure the colonists' personal liberty and its victorious close forced the separate states to face the necessity of creating a national government. Such a government evolved slowly but by the end of the eighteenth century its federal form had been determined. The individual states then had to seek ways to solve problems caused by the break with England, by their new relationships to each other, and by provisions of the federal constitution.

In New York the problems were multiple and complex. At war's end the state's population was located mainly on Long Island and along the Hudson River Valley. The original large royal land grants were being fragmented and sold to farmers. Pioneers who had migrated from New England into the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania were now eyeing the rich Indian lands in Central New York. The governor at this time was the anti-Federalist George Clinton, who had earlier served as a colonial governor of New York. It was written of him that he was "virtuous and loves his country, has abilities and is brave."

Clinton was known as a keen judge of men and in general his appointments were good ones. When Gen. Philip Schuyler resigned as surveyor general of the State in 1784, Governor Clinton appointed his distant relative Simeon DeWitt to the post. In order to accept, it was necessary for him to offer his resignation to General Washington. Thus Simeon DeWitt began that year a state service that was to occupy him for fifty years, until his death in 1834.

As surveyor general, DeWitt faced many of the major problems troubling New York, for in the postwar period this state

had to settle her border disputes with neighboring states. A treaty was negotiated with Massachusetts over contested lands in the western part of New York, and another had to be negotiated with the state of Vermont. In 1786 the New York-Pennsylvania border was surveyed and jointly agreed upon. DeWitt was instrumental in each case.

As the lands in the Hudson River Valley and along the Mohawk Valley became thickly settled there was a general surge to the west. Interest in the fertile lands in Western New York created new problems that demanded immediate solutions. An equal distribution of the land was desirable but no one knew the extent or topography of the contested area. Speculators wanted large tracts for private exploitation. The state's Revolutionary War soldiers had yet to be paid off in land promised in return for service. Best utilization of natural waterways had to be investigated, surveyed and engineered to facilitate the flow of people and goods into western reaches of the state. And finally, the land in question was still occupied by members of the Iroquois Indian Confederation. They had to be dealt with to insure a peaceful expansion.

As surveyor general of the State, it was natural that DeWitt became involved in the treaty negotiations pertaining to settlement of the Indians' rights to their former domain. Reservations were created and the Indians were moved onto them, but those who wished were permitted to leave the specified areas assigned them and move westward or into Canada.

As the Indians took up life on reservations or departed the state, the central portion of New York became available for settlement. Some areas were sold outright to groups of land speculators from New York City and even Europe, and in turn sold portions to the actual landholders, hoping to realize a profit by developing transportation and townsites along with farm lands. Much to their dismay, return on their investments was slow because most settlers seeking new areas to farm did not have the purchase price and had to rely on large loans to finance their acquisitions, a slow process.

Under various acts of the new state Legislature, New York men had been encouraged to volunteer for Army service during the conflict with Britain. Their reward would be grants of land

distributed as soon after the peace as possible. Each private who fulfilled the terms of his enlistment was to be granted a plot of 600 acres; according to rank, commissioned officers received more. An area called the Original Military Tract was designated for this purpose in the northern part of the state, but the land was discovered to be of poor quality. Various treaties with the Indians in 1788 and 1789 opened up some 1,628,000 acres east of Seneca Lake in what would become Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Cortland, and parts of Oswego, Wayne, Schuyler and Tompkins Counties. This land was designated the Military Tract and the Legislature ordered that a survey be made.

In order to accomplish such a massive undertaking, Simeon DeWitt devised a system of quadrants to plot and chart the dense forest lands. He appointed his cousin Moses DeWitt and Abraham Hardenberg, to lay out the military towns and the individual sections. It should be noted that most military towns do not correspond with today's political towns that are found in the eight counties into which the area was eventually subdivided.

DeWitt and his assistants estimated and diagrammed the area, indicating locations for the proposed military townships with numbers. Their maps were then submitted to the land commissioners who assigned names to the townships.

Numbers and names of involved townships are:

No. 1. Lysander	No. 15. Fabius
No. 2. Hannibal	No. 16. Ovid
No. 3. Cato	No. 17. Milton
No. 4. Brutus	No. 18. Locke
No. 5. Camillus	No. 19. Homer
No. 6. Cicero	No. 20. Solon
No. 7. Manlius	No. 21. Hector
No. 8. Aurelius	No. 22. Ulysses
No. 9. Marcellus	No. 23. Dryden
No. 10. Pompey	No. 24. Virgil
No. 11. Romulus	No. 25. Cincinnatus
No. 12. Scipio	No. 26. Junius
No. 13. Sempronius	No. 27. Galen
No. 14. Tully	No. 28. Sterling

The surveyor general assigned one lot in each township for support of a church and another for a common school, referred to as Gospel and Literature Funds. The land commissioners had charge of the other matters, from the naming, to the distribution of the land, to enactment of legislation to control fraudulent practices.

DeWitt maintained that he had had no part in the choice of names for the townships. He was, however, long charged as being author of such classical names as came to designate the military townships.

In 1802 John Vanderlyn wrote, "Simeon DeWitt, the State Surveyor General, had already passed over the country with his Lempriere in hand, erasing the Indian nomenclature, and giving to townships and villages names ludicrous in their misapplication, and provoking the most biting comparisons."

In 1819 *The Evening Post* of New York City printed the following poem about the surveyor general and the names in the Military Tract.

An Ode to Simeon DeWitt

TO SIMEON DE WITT, ESQUIRE, SURVEYOR-GENERAL

*If, on the deathless page of fame,
The warrior's deeds are writ;
If that bright record bear the name
Of each, whose hollowed brow might claim
The wreath of wisdom or of wit:
If even they, whose cash and care
Have nursed the infant arts, be there,
What place remains for these?
Who, neither warrior, bard, nor sage,
Hast pour'd on this benighted age,
The blended light of all the three.*

GODFATHER OF THE CHRISTEN'D WEST

*Thy wonder-working power
Has call'd from their eternal rest,
The poets and the chiefs who blest
Old Europe, in her happy hour:
Thou givest, to the buried great,
A citizen's certificate,
And aliens now no more
The children of each classic town,
Shall emulate their sire's renown
In science, wisdom, or in war.*

*The bard who treads on Homer's earth
Shall mount the epic throne,
And pour, like breezes of the North,
Such spirit-stirring stanzas forth*

*As Paulding would not blush to own,
And he, who casts around his eyes
Where Hampden's bright stone-fences rise,
Shall swear, with thrilling joint,
(As German did*), "We yet are free
And this accursed tax should be
Resisted at the bayonet's point."
What man, where Scipio's praises skip
From every rustling leaf,
But girds cold iron on his hip,
With "shoulder firelock" arms his lip,
And struts, a bold militia chief!
And who, that breathes where Cato lies,
But feels the censor spirit rise
At folly's idle pranks,
With voice, that fills the congress halls,
"Domestic manufactures" bawls,
And damns the dandies and the banks.*

*Lo! Galen sends her doctors round,
Proficients in their trade;
Historians are in Livy found,
Ulysses, from her teeming ground,
Pours politicians, ready made;
Fresh orators in Tully rise,
Nestor, our counsellors supplies,
Wise, vigilant, and close;
Gracchus, our tavern-statesman rears,
And Milton, finds us pamphleteers,
As well as poets, by the gross.*

*Surveyor of the western plains!
The sapient work is thine—
Full-fledged, it sprung from out thy brains;
One added touch, alone, remains
To consummate the grand design,
Select a town—and christen it,*

*An expression of Mr. Speaker German, in allusion to the assessment of property on the borders of the canal.

*With thy unrival'd name, DeWitt!
Soon shall the glorious bantling bless us
With a fair progeny of fools,
To fill our colleges and schools,
With tutors, regents, and professors.—CROAKER & Co.*

However, the truth seemed to be known, as can be gathered from this letter by Mrs. Basil Hall who journeyed with her husband from Albany to Niagara Falls. It was written in Auburn on June 21, 1828, where the Halls stopped after seeing the Cayuga bridge. She wrote:

“A gentleman . . . gave me an explanation of the names of the places on this road, which to some extent does away with the absurdity. They were lands which were given to the officers and soldiers who fought in the War of Independence as a reward for their services, a sort of pension, and the Commissioners who had charge of dividing them gave them those military Roman names that they now bear. . . .”

George P. Philes, born in Ithaca in 1829, did considerable research on the selection of names for the townships, and in a subsequent article in *Harper's Magazine* of September 1885, defends DeWitt. He establishes the fact that the naming was done by the Land Commission after the surveyor general had deposited his maps in which the townships were identified by numbers rather than names. Further, Philes emphasizes non-attendance of DeWitt at sessions of the commission. Philes' explanation of the naming is to be found in Dr. Albert Hazen Wright's *Simeon DeWitt and Military Tract Township Names*, published by the DeWitt Historical Society.

One last word in DeWitt's defense might be that classical names are found not only in the Military Tract but spread over the state.

By 1791 the 2,800 Military Tract lots were ready to be distributed. These bounty lands too rarely lured the soldier-recipient to occupy and transform them, and so few veterans benefitted from them. Many sold or traded their rights to the land to realize a pittance. Frauds abounded, and plots were often sold to several different persons. Speculation added to the general confusion and the question of legal title became a

thorny one. A lack of confidence in the Military Tract titles frightened away many prospective settlers, most of whom moved farther west into the Phelps and Gorham Purchase where an untroubled title to the land could be readily obtained. It was not until 1803 that the legal questions involving the Military Tract were settled. As late as 1820 an Ithaca law partnership was advertising in the Ithaca *American Journal* that “they will likewise, if requested, assist Revolutionary Soldiers, and Soldiers of the Late Army, in adjusting any claims they might have. . . .”

DeWitt’s long service as surveyor general of New York involved him with the land speculators of the day. He supervised the charting and development of the Chenango Twenty Townships in 1789. He must have watched carefully as the New York City and foreign speculators swallowed up the western lands, especially the area west of Seneca Lake that was sold off by Massachusetts to Phelps and Gorham, Robert Morris, and the Holland Land Company.

DeWitt’s fifty-year association with the State of New York raises questions for the historian. He was obviously a well-qualified man for the office, and well-connected with two of the state’s governors, George Clinton 1777-95, and DeWitt Clinton 1817-1823 and 1825 to 1828. However, during a period of great political upheaval in New York politics, when civil servants were being shuffled in and out of office, he maintained his position continuously. Speaking of this political turmoil, it was recently noted that “Even humble and faithful servants of the State were removed from minor posts for political expediency after years of service.”

DeWitt’s job was neither minor nor inconsequential, for his office supervised development of towns, roads, and canals which radically affected value of surrounding land. The office of state surveyor could have been a choice political appointment and certainly there were others with some degree of qualifications. One wonders, then, why DeWitt remained so secure in the position. Why was he exempt from the political upheavals in state and local government? Does the answer lie in the nature of the job, or perhaps in the political maturity of one who held it so long?

While political strife had continued throughout the period in Albany, New York was fortunate to have had a series of outstanding leaders. Although George Clinton, Martin Van Buren, DeWitt Clinton, and Daniel D. Tompkins had many differences, they each saw fit to continue in office Simeon DeWitt, as the State's surveyor general.

During the years of DeWitt's State service, 1784-1834, he was actively engaged in several other activities, being a man of energy and diverse interests. This period corresponds with his financial involvement in the development of Ithaca. In addition he was active in numerous budding scientific and educational enterprises. They were also the years during which he fathered his six children.

In 1789 DeWitt, then thirty-three years old, married Elizabeth Lynott. The marriage was childless and it ended four years later with his wife's death. In 1799 DeWitt married Jane Varick. They had two sons, but in 1808 the second Mrs. DeWitt died. Two years afterwards, Simeon DeWitt, fifty-four years old, married again, this time to thirty-two-year-old Susan Linn. They had three daughters and one son.

Mrs. Susan Linn DeWitt was the daughter of the Rev. William Linn, a well-known minister of the time. She herself was a popular author of prose and poetry, *Justina*, a novel, and *The Pleasures of Religion*, a long poem, are included in her work. Her death was reported in the news columns of the *Ithaca Journal* of May 19, 1824:

"Died on the 5th inst. in Philadelphia, whither she had gone on a visit to her friends, Mrs. Susan DeWitt, wife of Simeon DeWitt, Esq., of Albany, late Miss Linn of Phila., second daughter of the late Dr. Linn. A spirit of greater purity never dwelt in the female bosom; a heart of more sympathy, tenderness and sensibility never throbbed in human breast—devoted to the love of God from her earliest youth, her confidence in religion was firm and invariable."

There were numerous other activities that occupied DeWitt during these years. When DeWitt Clinton was elected mayor of New York City, he appointed his cousin Simeon DeWitt to serve on a commission to plan future development of the city. In 1811 the commission issued its report, advising that future

city streets be adapted to a gridiron pattern to utilize space most efficiently. This plan gave each city lot a broad front and a narrow back line to form almost pie-shaped wedges.

DeWitt was a charter member of the Society of the Cincinnati, whose membership was composed of commanding officers of the Revolutionary War. From 1798 on he was actively involved with the University of the State of New York, serving first as regent and after 1829 as chancellor.

DeWitt manifested an interest in science. In 1809 he contributed to the *Journal* of the American Philosophical Society an article on the sun eclipse of that year as viewed from Albany. From 1790 on he was a board member of that society.

DeWitt had a long-standing interest in agriculture, and became an early supporter and promoter of enlightened and scientific farming. In 1793 he helped form the Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts and Manufacturing, and twenty years later became its second president.

During 1819 DeWitt published in Albany a pamphlet entitled *Considerations on the Necessity of Establishing an Agriculture College and Having More of the Children of Wealthy Citizens Educated for the Profession of Farming*. In it he urged that the wealthy and educated members of society look upon the practice of enlightened farming as an honorable and worthwhile profession. He hoped to see the status of farmers in America raised to the level of the clergy, the law, and medicine. He compared America with Europe, where the overseeing of large farms occupied the gentry and the landed aristocracy.

His hope was that the affluent citizens who took up agriculture would do so out of a scientific and humanitarian interest. They need not farm for their very existence and therefore could experiment with grains and soils, seeds and animals. Their curiosity would in turn benefit the less fortunate farmer who had neither the ease nor education to farm creatively. A second great advantage would be derived from such a life, he thought. Agriculture, being very demanding, would prevent the children of rich parents from becoming lazy and indolent. Their activity would enrich their lives and give them the discipline too often lacking in the more comfortable homes.

DeWitt's stress on the need to educate the young into the

ways of enlightened agricultural practices in a formal institution or college, was ahead of his time. He felt that the college should teach both theory and method, and that farm work would be required of the student body. The college would enlighten the student and bestow upon the profession a dignity previously lacking.

It was to Simeon DeWitt that David H. Burr went when he began preparation of his Atlas of New York State. DeWitt encouraged the project, lent his name for advertising purposes and supplied his notes for Burr to work with. Perhaps DeWitt also referred Burr to publishers in Ithaca when the project was ready for the press. Burr's atlas was a popular success and it went into several editions. One copy is preserved in the DeWitt Historical Society's museum.

One contemporary newspaper account of the map of New York reads, "the plan of Ithaca will be engraved by materials furnished by the Surveyor General, Simeon DeWitt, and S. DeWitt Bloodgood, Esq." Following this there is a long statement of endorsement by DeWitt in which he averred that Burr was a qualified mapmaker. The advertisement, which appeared in the *Ithaca Chronicle* on April 23, 1834, ends its notice with the following paragraph:

"No higher recommendation of this map will be needed in this vicinity than is furnished by the Surveyor-General."

Legislative business kept DeWitt confined to Albany when his letters indicate he wanted to be in Ithaca. In addition, he participated in the survey of the capital city.

The most important enterprise that involved him was promoting and building the Erie Canal. When DeWitt first heard of the project to link the eastern and western parts of the state with a waterway, he was opposed to the idea. Shortly afterward, however, when he realized the potential of the canal in terms of communication and transportation, and when he realized the canal would speed settlers into Central and Western New York he became one of the canal's great partisans.

One of the many problems facing the state after the Revolution was that of transporting people and trade goods into the western areas of the state, and bringing raw materials out of the wilderness area to the coastal trade centers. The idea of

internal improvements was first mentioned by Gov. George Clinton in 1791 when he said, "Our frontier settlements, freed from apprehensions of danger, are rapidly increasing and must soon yield extensive resources for profitable commerce; this consideration forcibly recommends the policy of continuing to facilitate the means of communication with them, as well to strengthen the hands of society as to prevent the produce of those fertile districts from being diverted to other markets."

A year later he expanded his first statement by summarizing actions of the Legislature during the year past. The Legislature, he reported, was impressed with the importance of improving the means of communication, not only to the agriculture and commerce of the State, but even to the influence of the laws, directed the Commissioners of the Land Office to cause the ground between the Mohawk River and Wood Creek, a feeder of Oneida Lake in what was then Herkimer County, also between the Hudson River and Wood Creek, in the county of Washington, to be explored and surveyed, and estimates to be formed of the expense of joining those waters by canals.

A tour of exploration and inspection was undertaken in 1810, when the Legislature pledged a \$3,000 supply bill to cover the cost of a board of commissioners to trace the proposed canal route. Two of the six members of the commission were Simeon DeWitt and his cousin DeWitt Clinton.

By 1825 the Erie Canal was functioning and bringing immigrants and goods into the westward portions of the state. Its economic effect upon the areas it serviced was of great importance for it helped small villages boom into cities that acted as distribution points for people and materials moving in all directions during these exciting years. The waterway spread news about the frontier communities, insuring they would not be cut off from the events of Albany and New York City.

During DeWitt's long tenure in office as surveyor general, New York had enlarged its population, if not its land area. Its electorate had grown and its character had radically changed. The borders of the state, except in the western region, were set; and it was at peace with its neighbors. New Englanders in search of better land and larger farms were pouring into its central and western areas, taming the wilderness and helping develop their special character and prosperity.

The Absentee Landlord

Simeon DeWitt lived and worked in and out of Albany from 1784 until 1834. For these fifty years he was steward of the state's land, he defined its boundaries, and he came to know its geography by his miles of travel throughout the interior. The state claimed his working days, and from all indications he served her well. While he was thus employed, his imagination and resources were for much of the time occupied by a small tract at the head of Cayuga Lake. Ithaca was to be DeWitt's gift to posterity, but before passing it on to history, he insured that it would reflect his ideas about cities and their function.

Simeon DeWitt became involved with the lakeshore property shortly after the death of his first wife, Elizabeth Lynott. Miss Lynott whom he married on October 12, 1789, was the stepdaughter of Abraham Bloodgood, then an Albany resident and a descendant of a Dutch family that had settled in Flushing, Long Island.

In 1789 Bloodgood had requested of the state a patent of 1,400 acres of land at the south end of Cayuga Lake, and the state conveyed ownership to him. These acres, in the shape of a rectangle, were described in an index to the state land records. Present location of this parcel is the area in the commercial section of Ithaca, bordered on the east by Tioga Street; on the south by a line to the foot of West Mill; thence northward parallel to Tioga Street, to a line extending eastward on the northside of Lincoln Street to Tioga, containing 1,400 acres.

In 1794 Bloodgood's son, Francis A. Bloodgood, found himself in an embarrassing financial situation which involved the Cayuga Lake property he had been managing. Abraham Bloodgood took the matter to his widowed son-in-law, Simeon

DeWitt, who had dealt for the past ten years with New York land distribution, management, and ownership.

Ultimately, Bloodgood passed control of the property to DeWitt in order to give him legal authority to deal with the land. As compensation for his efforts, DeWitt was to retain for himself acreage equivalent to his service. The remainder of the property was to be returned to Francis Bloodgood for his own use or further speculation.

To get a clearer idea of the property and its worth, DeWitt wrote his young cousin Moses DeWitt, giving him instructions to carry out a survey and to set up the area in salable plots. The letter was written from Albany on April 2, 1794.

“It is my request of you that you will lay out the Tract of Land at the Head of the Cayuga Lake (granted by Letters patent to Abraham Bloodgood, and which he has conveyed to me) into such convenient lots as you may think proper for improvement and in my name to agree with people who wish to improve the same for use and occupancy thereof.”

It was during this trip into Central New York that Moses DeWitt died near Syracuse in 1794, aged 28.

Simeon DeWitt retained 1,000 acres of land in exchange for his efforts on behalf of the Bloodgood family, returning 400 acres to Francis Bloodgood. Young Bloodgood held his property and later moved to Ithaca to manage it. He was a lawyer practicing in Utica at the time.

Late in 1796 DeWitt toured New York state, taking notes for a survey and map then in preparation. It is believed that during this journey he visited his holdings at the south end of Cayuga Lake. His campsite was on East Hill, looking toward the lake and dramatically perched on the edge of Cascadilla Gorge. He was to develop a fondness for that spot, under a grove of pine trees, and expressed a hope to someday settle there.

DeWitt's affection for the Cayuga Lake area led him to amass adjacent property to add to the Bloodgood acreage. Lot No. 94 of the Military Tract was the obvious addition as it bordered on DeWitt's holdings. This lot had been allotted to Hendrix Loux, a Revolutionary soldier, who sold it almost immediately upon receiving title to it. One Van Rensselaer was

the purchaser. He sold it to a "Robert McDowell, of Mohawk."

McDowell was interested in speculation, and divided the lot into three sections. The northern part, some 170 acres, was sold in 1797 to Benjamin Pelton, who subsequently bought the southern sector from McDowell. This gave Pelton all of Ithaca's South Hill and land south of Six Mile Creek. Pelton sold his northern area to Phinneas Bennett.

The central part of Lot No. 94 was sold to Simeon DeWitt but only after McDowell had retained fourteen acres. These fourteen acres had a complicated history of their own, for McDowell split them into a ten-acre and a four-acre plot. The four acres, roughly land lying east of Aurora Street and south of the Jericho turnpike were given by McDowell to his son John, Richard W. Pelton and Nicoll Halsey, a son-in-law. In 1808 Luther Gere and John M. Pearson bought from the trio the four-acre plot for \$100. When Pearson died, Gere conveyed the acreage to Widow Pearson who traded it with DeWitt for city Lot No. 62. The remaining ten acres held by McDowell were bought by Gen. John Smith.

DeWitt was said to have named the area about 1806 after a fancied resemblance of the hills and lake in the Greek island of Ithake. The name appeared on a state map of that date. Since DeWitt had never visited Greece nor manifested a great interest in things Greek, and since the Greek island is but a craggy islet set in the Ionian Sea, one may wonder if the origin of Ithaca came from such a romantic flight of fancy in an otherwise practical man. Rather, the name may have been chosen as many other names of the day were, to lend dignity to an area known locally as Sodom or simply as The City.

That DeWitt applied the name Ithaca to his settlement may be legendary. There seems to be no direct statement of his that would clear up the puzzle. A map found in the Cornell Public Library and given Cornell University Library after an exhibition in the Women's Community Building three years ago, was a very old one. Its method of reproduction from original drawings supports this statement. "Ithaca" had been imposed upon this map after its lithographing, and in a style of lettering distinctly different from that exhibited by the map. Even

though the date of the map may have been 1806 or earlier, the superimposed lettering is definitely a later inscription.

Although DeWitt had never been to Greece or manifested any special interest in that ancient land, there are other possibilities for his selecting the name Ithaca for his village. It is known that he was prepared for Queen's College by the Rev. Mr. Romeyn, who possessed a classical education of which his student must have been a beneficiary. The young man had no choice but to qualify in Greek for admission into a school which required it in undergraduate courses.

In pursuing such a course there is no reason to believe that DeWitt did not have access to and make use of Greek texts that offered engraved reproductions of scenes in Greece. In this manner he could well have become familiar with the background landscape of the Grecian Ithake.

Some years ago the late John Floros brought back from a visit to his native Greece a view of present-day Ithake, and gave it to the DeWitt Historical Society. A cursory study of this photograph discloses a marked similarity with the Ithaca topographical setting.

Prior to DeWitt's interest, Ithaca had not been neglected by Indians, traders, speculators and settlers in that order. There had been an Indian village along Six Mile Creek that extended as far south as Wells Falls. Two miles up Cayuga Inlet another Indian village, called Coreorgonel, existed from about 1753 to its burning by Col. Henry Dearborn's detachment from Sullivan's army in September 1779. Another detachment, under Colonel Butler passed along the east shore of the lake, through the site of today's Ithaca, and came upon the smoking embers of the village. A decade later three families settled in today's DeWitt Park area, and along the foot of East Hill.

In 1805 there were six frame houses on the small piece of high ground, called the Tadpole, which was the only flat area that escaped flooding by high water. This would be located today in the neighborhood of Seneca, Buffalo and Court Streets, east of Cayuga Street, and extending to present-day Linn Street at the base of Cascadilla Falls. Southward, the "Tadpole" threaded its way to the marshlands beyond.

By 1807 DeWitt had surveyed forty-nine lots which were

destined to become the heart of the settlement, and occupied the area from East Seneca Street east to Aurora Street, and north to Cascadilla Creek. He expressed willingness to let out land to persons interested in improving it. The lease was to run for one year, at which time their tenure would be reviewed. Parts of the land were set aside to be orchards, and as early as 1794 DeWitt was engaged in contracting for the planting of fruit trees. Timber stands were to be set aside and strictly protected from all trespassing upon it; he was willing to prosecute anyone violating the timber reserves. Lot No. 49 was set aside for a school site. In the original map DeWitt set up three streets running east to west: Buell (now Buffalo Street), Seneca, and Mill (now Court Street). The north-to-south streets were Tioga and Aurora, each going from Seneca Street to Cascadilla Creek.

DeWitt was able to watch the growth of his small town only from afar, for his position with the state government gave him little leisure to spend in Ithaca. He wrote February 18, 1810: "The place to which I propose to go, when I have no business here, is a village of at least thirty houses; and fronts a plain of the richest lowlands."

Growth of Ithaca did not live up to DeWitt's expectations. Rather than spectacular development as a transportation and communication center, Ithaca gained settled citizens a few at a time. The War of 1812 spurred the local economy for, with the Nova Scotian source of gypsum cut off for Americans, it was mined and processed near Union Springs on Cayuga Lake and then transported through the county to Owego on the Susquehanna. Ithaca was developed as a depot where the barges unloaded their cargo onto wagons which were then hauled by teams over the Ithaca-Owego turnpike for faster transportation to manufacturing centers of the East. All this activity attracted teamsters to work in town, but few of them became permanent citizens. Their influence was, rather, a loud and boisterous one that caused local inhabitants a good deal of worry and annoyance.

DeWitt Clinton reported favorably about Ithaca. He wrote that "it contains a post office, two taverns, stores, tannery, mills, etc., and nearly fifty houses. It is one and a-half miles

from Cayuga Lake. Boats can come up, about one quarter of a mile from the compact part of the village, in an inlet, which is dead water. It is in a valley, is surrounded by hills on three sides, and on the north by the lake and its marshes. A creek runs through Ithaca, that turns a mill, supplies a tannery, etc., and contains trout. The situation of this place, at the head of Cayuga Lake; and a short distance from the descending waters to the Atlantic, and about 120 miles to the descending waters of the Mississippi, must render it a place of great importance."

Only with the advent of the Erie Canal did Ithaca begin to gain population with any speed. The canal opened the way to Albany and this led to a greater flow of goods and people through the village. It was reported in September 1820, "The Great advantage to this part of the country from the Grand Canal in the transportation of goods and produce is forcibly illustrated by a report that Capt. W. R. Collins, of this village, performed the passage from Utica to Montezuma (96) miles with his horse-drawn boat all the way by one horse, in three days, with a freight of 15 tons. From Montezuma to this place is a passage of one day or more, according to the wind up the lake. Before construction of the canal, six tons were a load for a boat at this season; and to transport that burden from Utica to this village would require from eight to twelve days and the labor of five hands at least."

In 1818 Ithaca had a population of 611 which supported one church, one courthouse, 17 stores, 7 groceries, 28 mechanics shops and 8 offices. By 1823 population had jumped to 1,268 and the town itself was sizable. There were a great many craft shops in the village, creating the necessities and frivolities for life in the semi-wilderness. Such enterprises as printers, binders, hatters, cabinetmakers, carriage shops, cooper, and tin-smiths, saddlers, shoemakers, tanners, tailors, clothiers, blacksmiths, stonecutters, potters, bakers and barbers brought the artifacts of the coastal cities to the lakeside community.

DeWitt Clinton called his cousin Simeon, The Proprietor of Ithaca, and indeed he was. He concerned himself with all phases of growth and development in his town. His expanded holdings ran from the Pelton lands on South Hill to the lake-

shore and east and west to the ridges of the hills that looked down at the settlement in the flat below.

His initial concerns were that the land be suited to its use, that the lots be reasonable in price, that credit be easily extended, and that he maintain a controlling and steady hand on all activity.

That the flatland was suited to commercial development, owing to its access to land and water communications, was obvious. Cascadilla Falls was a source of waterpower, and he had a mill built there to take advantage of it. Just beyond DeWitt's domain was the waterpower potential of Fall Creek, a community that merged with Ithaca in later years.

DeWitt planned areas outside the residential-commercial blocks to provide orchards, a farm for himself, and timberlands. Cows were to be restrained in fenced pastures and if this was not enough protection for them and for the commerce in the village streets, they were to be equipped with boards secured to their heads to block their progress, a simple, age-old device for which the proponent could claim no originality. The instructions appear in his letter of March 30, 1824.

DeWitt stipulated in leases that improvements be made on the land. Village house lots, for example, must be fenced in. Installments were from \$20 to \$30 per annum for a city lot, which usually was 64 feet wide and 200 feet deep. Cost of the property, however, depended on its location, and those nearest the inlet carried a higher price because of their proximity to water transport. DeWitt likened the wharf area of Ithaca to that of Albany, and he liked to claim an equally prosperous future for his town.

His plans for Ithaca were quite different from those actually developed. This is indicated by a map found in the library of Cornell University in 1948, a copy of which hangs on the west wall of the County Clerk's office.

Although no signature of DeWitt has been found, its title describes it as "A Map of Ithaca and Adjoining Land Belonging to Simeon DeWitt in 1806." There is nothing to indicate that these words are those of the supposed owner.

A study of the map discloses a canal running from the lake along the course of today's Geneva Street south to West Green.

This section of the proposed canal extended north to what is today's West Court Street and was labeled "West Bason." Across it were indicated on the map eight spaces for erection of stores and warehouses with intervening wharves. These facilities were diagrammed as extending in an east-west direction, and showing two double and three single spaces.

West Bason forms a junction with North Bason where today Geneva meets West Court. Extending eastward to the fourth block of North Tioga Street, it provided three single and two double spaces for warehouses and wharves. It is assumed the spelling "Bason" is an exercise of DeWitt's prerogative.

Between today's West Buffalo and West Court Streets there had been mapped Store Street, but the name had been crossed out by an "X" drawn through the name. Beyond North Bason a street had been indicated as Bason, but this, too, had been similarly crossed out.

To manage his property in Ithaca, DeWitt had a series of agents who executed his orders, collected his rents, prosecuted those who trespassed on his property or failed to carry out the terms of his contracts with them. Farmers found that he would order eviction arising from negligence on their part. Shopkeepers might find that their lease for a choice location would be canceled because DeWitt felt that for betterment of the community a more important enterprise should be located on the site.

Cornelius Green was his first agent. William Linn, a brother of DeWitt's third wife, was named next to fulfill the position. Linn, a lawyer, practiced with a variety of partners in the Ithaca area.

Linn, for whom Linn Street is named, began mixing his financial affairs with those of DeWitt's. Even worse, he proved to be too lax, writing contracts without clear obligations on the part of the lessee, neglecting to hold people to the terms of their contracts and failing to collect rents and prosecute the delinquents.

About this time Francis A. Bloodgood, then practicing law in Utica, decided to move to Ithaca to supervise his holdings in the now flourishing village. DeWitt was pleased when he heard of Bloodgood's intentions and wrote, asking that he help out

as agent in certain selected cases. After this it became easy to pass more and more of the work of agent on to Bloodgood rather than to Linn. Finally, in December 1822 DeWitt wrote: "The original crisis has come, which I have feared, that my interest increasingly demanded that I waive all delicacy with regard to Mr. Linn and immediately take my business out of his hands. A faint hope that he might do better has prevented me from doing it when I was at Ithaca." On December 11, the papers with Bloodgood's power of attorney arrived from Albany, declaring him DeWitt's "true and lawful Attorney . . . to ask, demand, sue for, recover and receive."

DeWitt's interests in Ithaca were extensive. As agents, Linn and then Bloodgood found themselves checking the fencing on tenants' land, insuring that Cayuga Street was paved with stones in order to make it a firm bed for carts, wagons and pedestrians; growing of horse chestnut trees around the public square, for which he had sent the seed, and ordered distribution of remaining nuts to others who might be interested in civic beautification. The agents supervised leasing and sale of DeWitt's lands, as well as overseeing leasing the gristmill and sale of whisky made at the brewery (*sic*). They collected rents and policed improvements DeWitt sanctioned for his farm and commercial holdings.

In 1817 William Linn advertised in *The Ithaca Gazette and Religious Intelligencer* that DeWitt's brewery had had a "good year. Rye Whisky was for sale in any quantity over two gallons for a low Cash price." The advertisement directed the buyer to "Apply to the subscriber at the yellow store, nearly opposite the tavern of Mr. Grant."

In 1819 the *American Journal* carried an advertisement for the sale of DeWitt's mill and distillery. By 1821 DeWitt was offering the distillery and mill for sale along with several farms in and about the village, and village lots. Prospective buyers were directed to William Linn in Ithaca or by mail to DeWitt at Albany.

This account of the gristmill was written in 1835 by a traveler to Ithaca:

"The first object that presents itself here is General Simeon DeWitt's Grist Mill erected 20 years since. It has two runs of

stones, is farmed out to Mr. John Brown, and grinds on an average 25 bushels per day—can grind 100.”

DeWitt continued to spur advancement of the village. The population had existed for some fifteen years without a bank, relying on drafts from Eastern banking institutions and locally issued “shin plasters” which served as currency in areas where specie was scarce. These were usually notes issued by local banking associations or prominent merchants and were often worthless and outside all controls. To assist local commerce, DeWitt offered city Lot No. 71 to the Bank of Newburgh for its Ithaca branch organized in 1815.

He was most enthusiastic about the building of the Clinton House, started in 1828, and from 1831, when it was opened to the public and until his death three years later, DeWitt made the three-story hotel his home.

DeWitt was jealous of any progress shown by other cities or towns in the Finger Lakes area that might detract from Ithaca’s growth or desirability. He believed the Erie Canal would help Ithaca by bringing in people and goods from Albany and New York City. This offset the adverse effect the Genesee Road had had on the area earlier which attracted prospective settlers away from the area with easier access to better land in the Genesee Valley.

When the Chemung Canal was proposed, DeWitt felt it would directly threaten Ithaca’s usefulness as a depot for goods flowing from Albany to the interior and from the interior of the state through Ithaca and on to the East by way of Owego. After 1810 the Ithaca-Owego turnpike had brought prosperity to Ithaca by giving it relatively easy access to paths east and south. The need in the cities for gypsum during the War of 1812 clearly showed the importance of the Ithaca-Owego turnpike, for it was recorded that on certain days more than 800 wagonloads of gypsum and other materials used the road.

To combat the threat of the Chemung Canal, DeWitt, Francis Bloodgood and others concerned with Ithaca’s abilities to compete decided to support a railroad that was to run from Ithaca to Owego. In 1828 the State granted the Ithaca-Owego

Railroad Company a charter, and then began a search for sufficient money to finance the project.

Besides Bloodgood and DeWitt, the directors of the company were Richard Varick DeWitt, Ebenezer Mack, Simeon DeWitt, Bloodgood, Andrew D. W. Bruyn, Cornelius P. Heermans, Myn-dert Van Schaack, James Pumpelly and Alvah Beebe. The state charter allowed the company to raise \$150,000 for the project even though it was clearly understood that four times this amount would be required to bring the railroad to completion. Chances, however, were taken during threatened canal competition. The railroad, so popular an idea with the public in the early 1830's, was broadly subscribed to, and in addition to the stock purchases came promises of additional prorata subscriptions when they were authorized by the State Legislature.

DeWitt and his son Richard Varick DeWitt subscribed for a large block of stock, as was expected of them. With money in hand, construction was begun and work was carried on so vigorously that before the Legislature allowed new capital to be raised by public subscription, the company was out of funds and unable to continue the project. Additional money was necessary lest construction come to a halt which would prejudice the Legislature against further advances. DeWitt and his son came to the rescue and pledged their individual credit, which allowed the northern section of the line to be completed in 1832. The State then contributed an additional loan of \$150,000 which was enough to complete the run of the track into Owego.

Late in March 1834 the *Ithaca Chronicle* carried requests for horses to draw the wagons over the track, and residents of Tompkins County were requested to rent their animals to the railroad company for a small sum, plus feed. On April 2, the *Chronicle* carried the bold announcement that the Ithaca-Owego Railroad was "ready to go" and the local populace was invited to come by to watch the inaugural run on "Monday, at 9 a.m."

April 9 the *Chronicle* carried an editorial on the railroad, prophesizing the greatness it would bring to the area. Then on April 14 the railroad company announced that the State had granted permission to seek buyers for 3,000 shares of stock.

All did not go as well as expected, however. In December of

that year Simeon DeWitt died, tying up his capital to a degree. More catastrophic, however, was the tenor of the times, for in 1834 the country was hurtling its way toward the great depression of 1836 that swept the nation and brought bankruptcy and ruin for individuals, companies and states.

Uneasiness of the day led the state of Pennsylvania to postpone payment on her public debt. This halted activity on public works in that state, most unfortunately for Ithaca's railroad speculators. The North Branch Canal, which was intended to connect the coal fields to the Susquehanna River, was abandoned. The Erie Railroad was halted before it reached the Susquehanna Valley, and, therefore, the connecting Ithaca-Owego Railroad link to the southern and central Pennsylvania highways was unnecessary.

In 1835 a promotional booklet concerning Ithaca carried a statement on the railroad that spoke bravely about the future of the line, despite many setbacks. It was an active freight line hauling plaster, coal, lumber, salt and ordinary merchandise. From May to November 1835, the article stated, it had carried 12,000 tons of freight and had realized \$3,300 from passenger fares.

The Ithaca-Owego Railroad, which was to have tied Ithaca to a huge transportation complex in Central New York and Pennsylvania, succeeded in merely connecting her to Owego. Stockholders feared the worse. They proved to be fairweather supporters only, and failed to buy additional stock or to honor their earlier promise to contribute additional funds. The road was left mortgaged to the State for \$300,000.

Depressed times further hurt the road by curtailing freight earnings. A conversion from "animal power to locomotives" was costly although necessary. Between April 1839 and January 1840 the railroad netted only \$10,646, hardly enough to pay for the mechanization. It was further reported that "there had been a very considerable amount of transportation done on the road, of which the company has no accurate account, the road being a free road, and no tolls having been collected for several months this year."

During 1842 the Ithaca-Owego Railroad was subjected to a

foreclosure sale, and the road and equipment were bought by Henry Ayres and Archibald McIntyre for \$18,000.

All the while Simeon DeWitt was involved with the development of the railroad, his name and the names of the other railroad supporters were curiously absent from other projects evolving in Ithaca. The public subscription for the Ithaca Theater in 1825 did not list DeWitt's support. And although he showed interest in an 1818 proposal for an academy to be established in Ithaca (see letter No. 4, dated December 8, 1818, from Simeon DeWitt to David Woodcock and Luther Gere), when the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1825 sought to plant the American University in the area, and while there were some local supporters for the idea and newspaper publicity on the subject, DeWitt seemed to show no interest.

The Cayuga Steamboat Company of 1819 and 1820 proceeded without his financial aid or public support. Even the Society for Agriculture in Ithaca did not attract him, although at the time he was involved in the statewide Society for the Promotion of Agriculture. The supporters of the Ithaca Canal which was to go from the lake into town fought alone for the idea and gradually admitted defeat when the idea came to nothing.

One development in Ithaca that did attract his attention and support was a congregation in search of a church. In 1830 the membership of the First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca numbered 800. The pastor, Dr. William Wisner, planned to have another Presbyterian Church formed, and for this purpose divided his congregation in half. The division, however, pleased few as most of the better workers were to be retained by the older church. Because of this, thirty-one members of the congregation were given letters of dismission and they joined with others in the village to form the Dutch Reformed Church. General DeWitt, a member of the communion, contributed \$2,000 to finance the new church, which gave way to the Congregational Church in 1871.

Before 1831 DeWitt was not a regular resident of Ithaca, being compelled to be in Albany whenever the Legislature was in session. However, he was deeply interested in the practice of agriculture and devoted his time and energies to increasing his

fields, their produce, and experimenting to devise better ways to farm on the land he reserved for his own use.

DeWitt Clinton reported on his cousin's activity in the field of animal husbandry:

“The proprietor of this village is the Surveyor-General. He has a merino ram of the 15/16, who has by thirty-three common ewes, forty-four lambs this year, twenty-eight of which are rams, and sixteen ewes. He intends to sell the rams at \$10 a piece; to purchase 100 ewes at nineteen or twenty shillings a piece; and as he has procured a full-blooded ram from the Clermont breed, his stock will then consist of the two rams and 150 ewes.”

DeWitt was a practical farmer. When he decided that sheep were a bad investment because each ate some 300 pounds of hay per winter and were worth only eight or nine shillings on the market in 1822, he decided to eliminate all livestock from his farm. This included the horses he had pastured for several years. (See letter No. 9, December 12, 1822). He shipped grass seed to be sown for a hay crop.

While in Ithaca during the summer recess of the Legislature DeWitt studied botanical specimens found in the area and, like an aged patriarch, he spent his last days at the Clinton House and viewed with pleasure the village he had helped create.

The Man in History

Simeon DeWitt expressed the wish to establish a home in Ithaca, on his farmlands which lay directly south of Cascadilla Gorge, site of his camp on his first visit to his Cayuga Lake property. High above the lake, but with a view of it through tall trees, its location was on the edge of a dramatic drop into the gorge. DeWitt Clinton wrote of this site in 1810, "He has selected a beautiful and very elevated spot, on the east hill, for a house, on which there is a small grove of the white pine, from which you have a grand view of the lake and country. On the north of this mount, you see below you a precipice of 100 feet, at the foot of which there passes through the fissures of the rock a considerable stream."

DeWitt's dream of building his own house was never realized. He did take over the Abram Markle house at the head of Linn Street when Markle failed and DeWitt foreclosed the mortgage. This house stood until 1957 when it was razed.

In late years DeWitt made his vacation home at the Clinton House, a lovely three-storied public house opened in 1831. It had been constructed by Jeremiah Beebe, Henry Ackley and Henry Hibbard at a cost of \$25,000 to \$30,000. The hotel was "equaled by few and surpassed by none in the state." Its high cupola afforded a commanding view of the village and the surrounding countryside. There were 150 rooms, including offices and banquet halls; the furnishings were of the best, and the food was reported good. One account of the menu at the Clinton House stated, "The Cayuga Lake being so near the village, affords the Landlords of Ithaca a constant supply of every variety of fresh water fish; and the Clinton House always has its full share."

It was at the Clinton House on December 3, 1834, that Simeon DeWitt died. He was 79 years old. Two days after his death

a large gathering of Ithacans met at the Clinton House, as a tribute to DeWitt, his long and productive life and his intense interest in Ithaca. "His relations to the village give us right to claim more than a general distinction through him. He was founder, sponsor and friend of Ithaca," wrote one local son.

At the public meeting of December 5, three resolutions were adopted. The first recommended that all citizens of the village attend the funeral service to be held that afternoon, as a last tribute to DeWitt "who has been endeared by them by particular relations and whose official services to the State, and private worth, entitle his character to a public testimonial of respect and gratitude."

The second resolution was a vote of sympathy and condolence to his family, who must realize, even in their grief, "that he has gone down to the grave full of years and of honors. The character of Simeon DeWitt, as a pure patriot, a zealous indefatigable Publick officer, an estimable citizen, and an honest man."

It was further resolved that all places of business be closed during the period of the funeral.

A long public announcement of Simeon DeWitt's death appeared in the *Ithaca Chronicle* of December 10, 1834. "He held a large space in the affections of the community," the report began. His summers in Ithaca were fondly remembered where he indulged. Another obituary was published the following week, giving a long account of DeWitt's life and his public service.

On December 24, 1834, a notice was published in the *Ithaca Chronicle*, inserted by the Society of the Cincinnati, stating that "the members of the society are directed to wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days, in memory of their dear deceased associate."

In an *Ithaca Chronicle* account of DeWitt's death it was stated that, "As an evidence that suitable respect was paid by our citizens to the remains and memory of the deceased, we refer to the proceedings which follow. The body was interred in a beautiful and romantic spot selected for the purpose upon the bank of his favorite Cascadilla."

This lovely site was the place originally intended to be his

homesite. In 1835 the grave was described by an unknown writer. "On the most elevated projection, terminating at the edge of a flourishing orchard directly below it, and about midway between the village of Ithaca and its adjunct, Eddyville, there is a neat picket fence, painted white, and enclosing an area of about 100 square feet." The writer lauds DeWitt's "unaffected piety, stern integrity, profound learning, republican plainness and simplicity of manners, pure patriotism and talents of a high, if not of the highest order."

DeWitt's gravesite remained secure, although unadorned by any public monument, until a gravel pit, opened to the west of the grave, started erosion that exposed the coffin. In 1844 Richard Varick DeWitt removed his father's remains to Albany where they were placed in a vault in the Old Middle Dutch Church. They were once again moved some fifty years later and deposited in the Albany Rural Cemetery.

Two local businessmen, Ancel St. John and William A. Woodward, were appointed, along with Richard Varick DeWitt, to supervise organizing, managing, and distribution of DeWitt's holdings in Ithaca. They determined he owned 1,932 acres of land. When the estate was ultimately put up for sale, it glutted the market and prices fell drastically, adding to the economic confusion and instability of the day.

In a memoir of his father, Richard Varick DeWitt described him in the following way:

"My father was a tall, large man, 5 ft. 11½ in. high, with a noble, serious face, resembling in some respects that of Genl. Washington, of grave but cheerful conversation, dignified deportment, affable to all, with that real polish of manner required by the society of the first gentlemen of the time in civil and military life, with whom his official position brought him in constant contact. He was a scholar, having taken the first position & borne the highest honors of his college [Queens, now Rutgers]. A mathematician of no mean acquirements and a philosopher in the widest sense of the word, either in physical or moral science, and to crown all a true and devout Christian."

Horace King, an Ithacan, was twelve years old when DeWitt died. In 1847 he wrote a historical paper of early Ithaca in which he attempts to describe DeWitt. "He was founder, spon-

sor and friend of Ithaca. He died here, and the place where his body reposes is known to all of us. . . . He has monument and memorial in the flourishing and beautiful village that his grave overlooks, and it will testify of him when you and I and generations yet unborn shall have passed away.”

Epilogue

The village that Simeon DeWitt left behind him at close of 1834 was a very different place from that of the few log cabins existing when he gained control of the land in 1794.

In 1834 Ithaca was a center of activity. Stage routes connected it with Catskill, a trip of 160 miles costing \$6; Newburgh, 175 miles with daily departures, for \$7; Jersey City, a 206-mile trip costing \$8 in summer and \$9.50 during winter months; Auburn, 40 miles for \$1.50 in summer and \$2 in the wintertime; Utica, \$4 fare for a 96-mile trip; Albany, 164 miles, \$6; Geneva and Elmira, 45 and 38 miles, respectively, for \$2; and Bath, 52 miles for \$2.75.

In addition, one could travel on the steamboat *DeWitt Clinton* which departed daily, except Sunday, at 6 a.m. from the head of Cayuga Lake to arrive at Cayuga Bridge at noon and back at the head of the lake at sunset. "We can recommend this as one of the most delightful water excursions to be enjoyed in any part of our country," one account of the trip explains. The number of passengers was 50 to 60 daily with a daily average of eight canalboats towed up and down the lake. The freight hauled was generally lumber, potash, flour, butter, salt, and plaster.

The Ithaca-Owego Railroad was a source of pride in 1834 and the people of Ithaca felt it would overcome its initial difficulties to be a splendid addition to the area.

In Ithaca village by 1834 there were five churches for the white population and one congregation for its 142 Negroes. The Negro congregation met in the home of their pastor, the Rev. Mr. Johnson.

Other religious groups included the Presbyterian Church which was formed in 1804 and was the oldest. There were 830

communicants in 1834. The Methodist Episcopal Church had a congregation of 600. The Episcopal Church was built in 1824 with a congregation of 200. The Baptist Church had 236 members and was established in 1826. The Dutch Reformed Church had a congregation of 550.

There were four Ithaca schools. The incorporated Academy of Ithaca had departments for both males and females. Besides this there were two select female schools and one Lancasterian school in the village.

During 1817, the first newspaper in Tompkins County was established in Ithaca and by 1834 there were three, *The Ithaca Journal*, *The Ithaca Chronicle* and *The Jefferson and Tompkins Times*. There were twenty lawyers, and nine doctors.

The commercial section of the village boasted two bookstores, drygoods merchants, 23 hardware stores, jewelers, druggists, and 16 grocers, 49 establishments in all.

There was a total of 289 mechanics in the village, with 14 tanners, 31 boot and shoemakers, 12 harness makers, 17 coach and wagon makers, 11 silversmiths, 5 gunsmiths, 12 copper and tin smiths, machinists and various numbers of furnace men, hatters, millers, cabinetmakers, turners, coopers, chair-makers, printers, painters, bakers, bookbinders, papermakers, brewers, ploughmakers, stonecutters, weavers, ropemakers, millwrights, patternmakers, boatbuilders, candle and soap-makers, and masons.

Other business establishments were millinery shops, a paper mill, a flour mill owned by J. S. Beebe and conducted by Ezra Cornell. A plaster mill also was owned by Beebe who rented out a building in which a machine shop was located. A chair factory turned out 2,000 chairs yearly. A plough factory and two woolen mills were successful. There was an iron foundry and a factory that produced a patented sawmill dog, and Ezra Cornell's father operated a pottery in the Fall Creek complex.

A steam-engine plant manufactured steam engines that combined steam and rarified air in a specially designed boiler. The engines were used in riverboats.

Besides the Clinton House, there was the Ithaca Hotel and the Tompkins House. In 1829 the Bank of Ithaca was incorporated.

The population of Ithaca numbered 6,101, which included 925 families. There were 1,084 votes cast in 1834, and in that year there were 47 marriages, 206 births, 80 deaths. There was one deaf and dumb child and four blind females.

Incorporated 13 years before, the village had by 1834 developed a form of municipal government. The Board of Trustees enacted laws to guard the public safety, notably in 1821 one to remove roaming swine from the streets; later laws to prohibit the stacking or piling or dumping of any materials such as wood or plaster into streets. Firearms were not to be fired within the village limits and any violation of this act would cost the culprit three dollars. A penalty of one dollar was levied on anyone flying a kite or playing ball on the two main streets. Speeding through town on either a horse or in a carriage was prohibited. All property owners were responsible for rubbish as far as the center of the street in front of their lots.

A fire-prevention system was established, and a constable was elected. A law was enacted to fence in the burial ground that DeWitt had allowed the early settlers to use, now City Cemetery.

Village population grew continuously, boundaries were expanded, and its importance as the county seat after 1817 gave the village added impetus. It has fulfilled, although in unexpected and divergent ways, hopes and expectations of its proprietor and original promoter, Simeon DeWitt.

Bibliography

There is no full-length biography of Simeon DeWitt and few articles even mention him or his work. There are only scattered references to him in works devoted to other topics. All this is rather surprising as DeWitt's life was long and his achievements numerous and of lasting importance. The material here has been gleaned from a wide variety of sources, but no attempt has been made to include every book used or every article read. A purpose of this essay is to give the reader a general idea of where to look for information on topics mentioned in the text.

General background material on New York State came from *A History of New York State* by David M. Ellis, *et alii*, republished in 1967. B. J. Lossing's *The Empire State* has been consulted. The *Dictionary of American Biography* contains a sketch of DeWitt that is helpful but not completely accurate.

Ithaca by Henry Edward Abt contains a valuable bibliography of books and articles about Ithaca, and it has been used, along with Horace King's 1847 lecture, *History of Early Ithaca* and Henry C. Goodwin's *Ithaca as It Was and Ithaca as It Is*, written in 1853. *The Development of Central and Western New York* by Clayton Man is not very helpful. Harold W. Thompson's volume, *Body, Boots and Britches* discusses Ithaca and Tompkins County in many topics.

As for Simeon DeWitt, we have attempted to utilize as many local sources as possible. Original letters from DeWitt or copies of them are found at the DeWitt Historical Society, at Cornell University, and at Rutgers University Library in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Numerous newspaper items by contemporaries of the man or his business activities have provided much information and many leads to other sources.

Deeds registered by DeWitt are in the County Clerk's office.

The DeWitt family genealogy may be traced in some detail in *Olde Ulster*, which was edited by Sutherland DeWitt in 1905 and 1906. Thomas G. Evans wrote *DeWitt Family of Ulster County* and William Walsh, *Tjerck DeWitt and His Descendants*, both strictly works of genealogical investigation.

The History of Orange County, written by Samuel Eager, is especially helpful. *The History of Ulster County*, edited by Alphonso T. Clearwater, is good on the Revolutionary War period, though lacking facts and dates about the early town histories.

In *Historic Houses of the Hudson* by Harold Eberlein and Cortlandt Hubbard there is an account of the founding of Orange and Ulster County towns, and a picture of Tjerck DeWitt's home in Hurley.

For information about early days at Rutgers University, Richard P. McCormick's *A Bicentennial History: Rutgers* has been used. *The John Bogart Letters 1776-1782*, issued by Rutgers University in 1914, contain DeWitt's early letters.

Albert H. Heusser has written a biography of Col. John Erskine in which DeWitt figures towards the end of the book. It has been issued twice under two titles; the more recent is *George Washington's Mapmaker*. The two editions of George Washington's correspondence contain letters to and about Simeon DeWitt.

The Military Tract is discussed fully in *History of Onondaga County*. Accounts primarily concerned with DeWitt's role include Albert Hazen Wright's pamphlet *Simeon DeWitt and Military Tract Township Names* published by the DeWitt Historical Society. In 1961 the Society issued also George P. Philes' defense of DeWitt entitled *The Godfather of The Christen'd West: Who Was He?* which took its title from a poem that appeared in *The New York Post* about the surveyor general. George R. Stewart's *Names on the Land* contains a short chapter about the military tract names, that begins on page 184. The quote by John Vanderlyn appears in his *Niagara Visit of 1802* published by the Buffalo Historical Society.

In the Cornell Regional Archives, there is a typescript account of Moses DeWitt written by the Rev. William M.

Beauchamp. The Mulks Notebooks are repetitive but interesting. Mrs. Basil Hall recorded her opinions of New York State that have been collected in a volume entitled *Letters of An Aristocratic Journey*.

Views of Ithaca and Its Environs by an Impartial Observer (identified as Solomon Southwick) has been continually helpful. DeWitt Clinton's *Canal Journal of 1810* was quoted on several occasions.

The Cornell University Library Rare Books Room has an early pamphlet about the Ithaca-Owego Railroad; it holds also several early Ithaca almanacs. In the Architecture Library at Cornell University there is a thesis based on DeWitt's ideas of a city planner as seen in early Ithaca. The *History of the Presbyterian Church, Ithaca, N.Y., 1804-1904* is extremely useful and contains the Rev. Samuel Parker's 1815 letter about the condition of life in Ithaca during those early years.

Introduction to Letters

The letters presented here were written by Simeon DeWitt between the years 1794 and 1831, and reflect his long-standing interest in Ithaca. The first was written to his cousin Moses DeWitt after the author's assuming control of the Bloodgood lands.

The second and third are dated 1810. These have been reprinted from the 1847 *Lecture on Early Ithaca*, delivered by Horace King, a young lawyer of promise; his *Lecture* remains one of the best sources of information about the early years of the community. These two early letters are incomplete, but interesting enough to be included here, as they reflect DeWitt's early enthusiasm for Ithaca, his interest in farming and agricultural experimentation, and they express his desire to settle and live in Ithaca.

The fourth letter is addressed to Luther Gere and David Woodcock and is dated December 8, 1818. In the intervening eight years Ithaca had grown from a small gathering of houses to a community supporting shopkeepers, printers and other artisans. In it he discusses location of a proposed academy. The original may be found in the Mack Collection, DeWitt Historical Society Archives.

Originals of the remaining fifteen letters may be found in the Regional History and University Archives, Cornell University, and are reproduced here by permission. These letters reveal the story of DeWitt's hiring Francis A. Bloodgood as his agent to replace his brother-in-law William Linn, who proved himself to be unreliable. The financial entanglement between the two men was an embarrassment to DeWitt. Letter No. 9 relates some of DeWitt's anguish at the dissolution of the business relationship between himself and Linn.

The letters as they appear here have been modernized so that the present-day readers will be able to read them without the barricades of age. Spelling and punctuation have been changed, and sentences shortened to suit modern style. The original wording, however, has been retained, and the intention of the writer in each has in no way been altered. The closing of each letter has been omitted as it is always the same, indicating the sender, place from which the letter originated, and a stylized flourish, such as, "Your humble servant, etc."

Letters Concerning Ithaca

It is thought there must have originally been a much larger collection of DeWitt's correspondence than can now be traced. The State holds less than a dozen letters, and these pertain to matters other than the development of his Ithaca property. A theory has been presented by State authorities that many of the letters were filed with the Clinton collection which was virtually destroyed in the fire of 1911.

Because DeWitt's literary style makes him something less than a popular author, readers are spared perusing letters other than those pertinent to his land development at Ithaca. Those used have been numbered and dated for readers' convenience as indicated by the following list, and they are presented progressively from April 2, 1794, to January 7, 1831.

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|-----|-----------------|
| 1. | 2 April 1794 | 10. | 3 April 1823 |
| 2. | 18 February 1810 | 11. | 4 June 1823 |
| 3. | 10 May 1810 | 12. | 21 October 1823 |
| 4. | 8 December 1818 | 13. | 30 March 1824 |
| 5. | 19 January 1822 | 14. | 1 April 1824 |
| 6. | 17 April 1822 | 15. | 2 April 1824 |
| 7. | 25 July 1822 | 16. | 12 April 1824 |
| 8. | 2 October 1822 | 17. | 2 May 1827 |
| 9. | 12 December 1822 | 18. | 18 October 1827 |
| | 19. | | 7 January 1831 |

1. SIMEON DEWITT *to Moses DeWitt*

2 April 1794

It is my request of you that you will lay out the tract of land at the head of the Cayuga Lake (granted by Letters patent to

Abraham Bloodgood, and which he has conveyed to me) into such convenient lots as you may think proper for improvement and in my name to agree with people who wish to improve the same for the use and occupancy thereof for terms not exceeding one year. And to execute writing for that purpose as my attorney.

I wish you also to set apart such parts as you may judge most proper for orchards and to contract for the planting of fruit trees thereon. Also to describe such parts as in your judgment ought to be retained as timber ground and to forbid all persons from trespassing on the same and in case any such trespasses are committed to inform me thereof in order that they may be prosecuted.

And to make all other arrangements respecting the said tract of land which you shall judge to be for my interest.

2. SIMEON DEWITT, *Recipient Not Known*

18 February 1810

The place to which I purpose to go, when I have no business here, is a village of at least thirty houses; and fronts a plain of the richest lowlands. If I should live twenty years longer, I am confident I should see Ithaca as important a place as Utica is now. Its advantages and situation cannot fail of giving it a rapid growth and making it one of the first inland places of trade. There is now no place of its size in the country where there is such a stir of business. The principal inn—a considerable two-story house—besides another respectable tavern, was found quite insufficient for the business. When Colonel Varick and I arrived there, breakfast had been served for thirty people before we got ours. The landlord (Vrooman)—a very respectable man—has last season built a large three-story house for a tavern. I mention these things to show that what I have contemplated for my future residence is not a dreary, solitary country situation.

[The hotel Jacob S. Vrooman erected was on the site of the recent Tompkins House on the corner of North Aurora and East Seneca Streets. At first called the Ithaca Hotel, the name

was changed to honor Gov. Daniel D. Tompkins. In 1809 Luther Gere chose it for his new hotel on the corner of East State and South Aurora Streets.—EDITOR.]

3. SIMEON DEWITT, *Recipient Not Known*

10 May 1810

I find this village considerably increased since I was here before. I have counted thirty-eight dwelling-houses, among which are one very large, elegant, three-story house for a hotel, and five of two stories; the rest of one story—all generally neat frame buildings. Besides these there is a school house and buildings for merchant's stores, and shops for carpenters, cabinetmakers, blacksmiths, coopers, tanners; and we have besides shoemakers, tailors, two lawyers, one doctor, watch-cleaner, turner, miller, hatters, etc., etc.

4. SIMEON DEWITT to *David Woodcock of Ithaca*

8 December 1818

I owe you and Mr. Gere an apology for not promptly answering your letter relating to an Academy. I was on business for several weeks, examining, laying out and appraising lands and a village at about the French Mills near Pt. Regis, as directed by a law passed last winter, which on my return left me with official business that prevented my immediate attention to the subject of your letter. Besides I could not really determine on what answer to give.

The ground south of the Six Mile Creek appeared to me to be objectionable for the Site of the Academy, as being too difficult of access in the way you proposed. The ground which I once offered, I had contemplated as a place where to select a lot for a Methodist Church if that Society should become sufficiently strong to build one, as some last Spring told me would be the case. Under that embarrassment, I could not well undertake an arrangement here, that might be objectionable to the citizens.

While thus deliberating, I received information that the

School house Lot had been fixed on; the place which I think under all circumstances the most eligible. I hope you will succeed so far as to enable the regents to give you a Charter next Winter, and have the Literature Lot of the town secured.

Whatever I can do to promote the object will be done. I had calculated to be up in the Fall, but my unavoidable Northern Tour, and public sales which I had advertised for the 17 & 18 Nov., with office business, which had accumulated, put it out of my power.

Give my respects to Mr. Gere, and have the goodness to communicate the contents of this letter to him—

5. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood of Utica, N.Y.*

19 January 1822

As you have determined to settle in Ithaca I wish to avail myself of your services to take charge of some of my concerns there. The South part of the Location as it is called is so situated as to require attention to it which my ordinary agent cannot well bestow on it. I therefore authorize you to take into your charge four hundred acres in the south part of the location the north bounds of which will be a clear east & west line run from the east to the west bounds thereof, which will take in all South of the clearing or fields which I have let to Mr. Quick. It will also take in all that is in possession of Mr. Rairden.

I put at your disposal the letting and collecting of rent of any part thereof. Also the contracting for the sale of any part of it on condition that I being informed of the terms shall approve thereof. I also authorize you to prosecute in my name for any trespass that may have been committed or shall be committed on the premises.

6. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

17 April 1822

I would have answered your letter written to me some time ago if I could have done it so as to answer your purpose. The fact is I cannot make any negotiations about my lots at Ithaca

without being there which I expected would be as early as you contemplated.

I purposed and had advertised to hold a sale of the Onondaga lands at Syracuse on the 16 of this month, and immediately after to proceed to Ithaca. The Senate, however, to accommodate some of the members who wished to have the sale some time after adjournment of the Legislature, in order to prepare for speculations, required me to put off the sale to the 18 of June.

My presence, however, will be required at Ithaca before that time and I expect to start for that place probably about a fortnight hence so that I shall be there not long after the time when you expect to be there, when such arrangements may be made as will accommodate you. The Legislature adjourned today and I will seek an opportunity to send this by one of the returning members.

7. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*
25 July 1822

When I left Ithaca I forgot to mention to you that in my contract with Chatterton and Baker for building my farmhouse I stipulated to pay them fifty dollars when the building is enclosed and request you to pay that sum to them out of the money you should receive on Mr. Connors note, when the condition is fulfilled on their part. You may inform them that you are authorized to do so. I wish you to see that the work is properly done.

As you will frequently pass by Bakers meadows I will be obliged to you if you pay some attention to the hay he will make and let me know as nearly as you can learn how many tons he will harvest. Cornelius Green was requested last year to see to the division of it. When that is done I will thank you if you will see how it is done and ask Quick to assist in it. Also request him to see to the division of hay with Butler. As Quick's meadows will be every day under your eye you will without much trouble be able to see if he makes a fair division of his hay.

In general you will do me a kindness if you will inform me from time to time what you may perceive affecting my inter-

est about Ithaca and give me your advice whenever you may think it proper. You may also as you pass by observe whether Mr. Leonard permits any wood to be carried through his gate from the lower part of the Inlet. I do not wish to give you any trouble in these matters further than merely to notice them as they fall under your eye.

8. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

2 October 1822

I expected by this time to have been at Ithaca but the business of my office has not permitted it nor will I be up until the latter part of this month. I intended to have written you by Mr. Doolittle but I did not see him on his return.

On the subject of Mr. Connor's note, I intended not to have troubled you further with it but to have left that matter to settle with him when I should see him. I must say that I was surprised to hear that he refused paying it & more so that he had before refused it. I had not intended to have presented it til the deeds & mortgage for the land should be exchanged which could not be done before as I had not been furnished with the survey which I requested him to have made & which he had made. I called two or three times on Mr. Ayers, who thought he had it but could not find it. I also called at the Bank to see Mr. Connors about the business with the note to present for payment, but he was absent from the village & I could not see him til I left the place.

I then left a note with Mr. Linn about the business, addressed to him, in which I informed him that the deed would be executed as soon as I could get the bounds of the ground. I had not the least apprehension that any difficulty was to occur. I had not been informed that the note had before been presented nor did Mr. Ayers say anything to me of a design to avoid the bargain. When he first proposed the purchase, he presented me with a letter signed Jonathan Wilkins (one whom Mr. Ayers told me was a substantial man), saying that whatever bargain Mr. Ayers should make with me he would agree to. I took it for granted that he acted for Mr. W., who wanted the place for his own use. I received no hint that it was in-

tended for any other purpose. In order however to secure the bargain, it was stipulated that within three months 250 dollars should be paid or secured to be paid. Mr. Ayers after his return discovered the mistake in the bounds of the contract & on the 7th of Sept. informed me of it, wishing a corrected contract to be sent up to be executed.

I wrote to Mr. Linn to inform him how the mistake was that instead of bounding the land by the North bounds of *my property* in Lot No. 94 — as was intended — I had in the hurry of writing, omitted the words of *my property in*, and the mistake being then acknowledged by both parties in writing there was no actual necessity for making a new contract, especially as it would not be long before the deed would be given, which would be done on the payment or security of the 250 dollars.

On the 28th of Nov. Mr. Connor wrote me that he had an assignment of the contract from Mr. Ayers and that he had given his note for the 250 dollars to Mr. Linn. “Which,” he says, “was intended as a fulfillment of the agreement on my part to this time,” & adds “Mr. Linn informed him that there is an error in describing the boundaries of the land intended to be conveyed, and that you promised to correct it.” To which I answered, “As this circumstance has been mutually explained by letters, no difficulty can arise from it.”

I added in my letter that I had requested Mr. Linn to inform Mr. Ayers that in order to avoid the trouble and risque of remitting money, I would expect that all payments would be made to me or my order and not to my ordinary agent. I said also, “on your sending me the \$250 I will execute the deed to be exchanged for the bond and mortgage as soon as I shall have received the precise bounds ascertained by survey.” I had before requested him to employ the best surveyor he could procure to make the survey, and this I found had been done.

I have not had any communication since from Mr. Connors. I found the land taken possession of and a great part of the timber cut & taken from it, & no intimation has been given to me that an attempt would be made to get rid of the Contract. Under these circumstances I could not suspect it. If it is expected that I will quietly permit it, I must be thought capable of being trifled with to a most extraordinary extent. I wish you

would take an opportunity to converse with Mr. Connor on this subject and learn what his decided intentions are in order that I may take my measures accordingly.

I depended with full confidence on the payment of his note to meet the engagements I had made. If he yet evades it, you may draw on me at sight for the money which is due on the contract with Chatterton and Baker for building the house, and for the Barrack, etc.

I take it for granted that your draught can be easily put off in your village to some merchant who may have remittances to make to his bank on New York. I am sorry that I should give you any trouble on my account. I did not expect that any would have arisen out of the transactions alluded to. If you draw on me, let it be soon, so that the draught may reach me say, in three weeks, for which time I shall certainly be at home. I remain respectfully Your friend.

9. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

12 December 1822

I am very much obliged to you for your letter. The crisis has come, which I have feared that my interest increasingly demanded that I wave all delicacy with regard to Mr. Linn and immediately take my business out of his hands. A faint hope that he might do better has prevented me from doing it when I was last at Ithaca.

My determination was to return in about three months and then make the essential alteration which I saw that my concerns required. Most unfortunately I could not do it without deserting duties of my office which in uncommon succession demanded my attendance, and for inattention to which I might incur blame that would be extremely injurious to me. And the same reason will prevent me from the possibility of coming up during the session of the Legislature.

Should I be continued in office, which is now perhaps more than ever an object with me, under these circumstances, I consider the only advisable step I can take to be immediately to revoke the powers I have given Mr. Linn, and by letter of attorney to put my business in your hands, as you are the

only person in Ithaca whom I consider a friend to my interest.

Without consulting you whether it will be agreeable to yourself, the urgency of the occasion requires this of me and I trust that you will not decline the duty. Some prudence will be required in the outset, to prevent persons indebted to me and to whom Mr. Linn may be indebted from having his debts to them charged to my account when they discover that his agency is to be discontinued.

I would therefore advise you immediately to call on the persons which I shall name, inform them that it is my request that they show you how their accounts stand with me, and take minutes thereof and, if they should dispute your authority, show them your power. Immediately thereafter have your power with Mr. Linn's revocation recorded and have the notice which I shall [have] published in Mr. Mack's paper.

Mr. Linn's desperate situation and the artifices of his creditors require that precaution should be used to prevent collusion and contrivance to get his debts charged to my account. Something of that kind I found had been practiced when I was last at Ithaca, and nothing but the reasons I have before mentioned induced me to delay decisive measures in consequence of it.

I shall write to him to inform him of all this as delicately as I can. Whatever regard I may have for him as a family connection, My interest . . . demands from me on this occasion to discharge him instantly from all concerns in my business. I shall direct him to lock up all my books and papers till I come up, which will be, I hope, as early next spring as possible.

My intention was to be up in Sept. and to spend four or five weeks in adjusting my business which requires essential modification. Among other things, I meant to have disposed of my flock of sheep of which more are stolen or die than the natural increase, and the hay they eat is worth more than the wool they produce. The calculation by writers on the subject is that a sheep will eat two pounds of hay or its equivalent and 8 pounds of grain per day. Supposing the winter to consist of 5 months or 150 days: 300 lbs. of hay will be required to winter a sheep, 20, 30, or 40 sheep may be kept to advantage but a large flock without a shepherd, I find by experience, perhaps

too late, is a losing business, especially in the hands of agents. I must, therefore, get rid of my flock as I conveniently can, and immediately if it could be done without too great a sacrifice.

You may take from my flock the number you want, for which you will be chargeable at the average of the sales I may make, or the value of them may be settled in any other equitable way. I will write to Dan'l Butler on this subject, and have an advertisement published that my sheep are for sale by him, instructing him in the mean-while to have no sale made but what shall be under your inspection or with your approbation.

The wethers ought to be kept separate from the flock and, if necessary, fed grain to fit them for market. Although mutton is very cheap, the hide and fleece add materially to the value. They are worth here, I am told, 8 to 9 shillings. The plan I have formed is to have no beast or animal of any kind to maintain.

Mr. Linn, without consulting me, made an agreement with Thomas Hoose, I think about two years ago, to work the land including the orchard south of the Cascadilla, for five years; to furnish him with teams and receive two-thirds of the produce. The ground was in excellent pasture before and ought never to have been broken up. It was fed down to sterility and crops have been raised on it of which I have had poor accounts. This arrangement I wish discontinued, and my horses, which thus become necessary to be sold as their keeping is worth more than the produce of the contract.

In this agreement was included the milling house, now occupied by Hoose, by which the accommodation for the mill has been destroyed and the mill lost its reputation which, if well attended as before, might have rented for two hundred dollars a year. Enquire of Mr. Hoose about the agreement and what his views are; also what has been the produce of his farm and where it is.

Harry Leonard had a lease of the distillery and still for the last year. I have not heard of any agreement with him since; inquire about it. No right, I believe, has been given him to cut wood for the distillery unless it be the old trees in the field north of the Cascadilla. Butlers family was allowed firewood, to be cut without unnecessary waste in my woods. The tops of the trees as well as the trunks ought to be taken.

Levi Leonard has no right to take any timber from any ground work of the turnpike except from what is included in his lease east of Gere's field. Those woods afforded timber for best structure on the flats; besides his own cattle, he took in others. I understood that and told him he should account to me for it. Inquire of him about it. Also the landing places along the Inlet about which there is a special agreement between us, which I presume he will have no objection to show you.

If you have an opportunity inquire if Mr. Beers who occupies the house and farm north of the Cascadilla how he has disposed of the share of grain he was to allow me, of wheat he raised, and see what he has prepared for next year's crops. I have declined entering into an agreement with him except verbally, that he is to deliver me one-third of this year's crop. I wish to sell that farm which I think ought to fetch \$30 an acre. I shall furnish you in season with a map of it.

What lies east of what was sold to Ayers by contract might be divided into two good farms, either by a north-and-south or an east-and-west line. It bounds on the north by Fall Creek and on the south by the Cascadilla.

I wish also to sell my mill and distillery. I think they are worth \$4,000. Rather than keep them on hand, I would bargain for less, giving ground so as take in the high falls. A Mr. Mof-fat of Auburn, Mr. Linn informed me, wished to know the price as he wanted to convert the distillery into a brewery for which it is well calculated as any place that can be found. The walls are still stuffed with dry tanner's bark. Mr. Sheldon, I think his name is, was in Ithaca when I was last up, inquired of the price for the information of some friends. I told him \$4,000.

I wish inquiry to be made of the following persons how their accounts on contract for lots stand. Let them show you the endorsements on them, and take memorandums thereof to ascertain what might possibly be subsequently indorsed to get Mr. Linn's accounts with individuals in that instance discharged: Wm. W. Faber, Wm. Mott, Franklin Sherrill, Henry Ackley, Philetus Perkins, Levi Leonard, David Curtis (the lot where the slaughter house stands, June 1, 1820. Contract for \$400. Nothing paid). If he makes no payment soon, he must be prosecuted or evicted. When I was last up, we discussed him:

he said he would be able to make a payment in a few months.

George Phillips, Mary Luce, Andrew Miller, Asa Winner, Barney Merian (I am not sure but he has settled. I have not my memorandum at hand). Luther Gere owed \$50 on the lease of his pasture last May.

I am apprehensive that Mr. Linn will have no money on hand to pay my taxes; enquire what they are.

What is Connor's intention with respect to his note, and the contract? What is done or doing with the land and the cut wood I saw on it. See what bargain can be made for the leasing of Baker's place.

I have not now time to enter into further particulars. I hope you will write soon. Whatever occurs to my mind, I will add in in another letter, You must follow the dictates of your own prudence in this unpleasant business.

P.S. I saw your mother a few days ago. She sat up, but feeble and gradually gliding to a better world. She is better than she was some time ago.

After sealing my letter, I recollected that it would be proper to give you the following which you may show Mr. L., if he should make a demand on you. I write him by the next mail after this and will mention it to him.

10. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

3 April 1823

I ought to have written you sooner and oftener, and indeed if it could possibly have been done, I ought (as an indispensable thing) to have been with you. But I am now convinced it would have been at the expense of losing my office.

My perplexity and anxiety about what my interests require to be done in Ithaca has been such that I have not been able to determine any positive advice. My intention was last fall to have made thorough arrangements with you and Mr. Broadhead's advice for the disposal and arrangements of my concerns. When Mr. B. left this [city] he assured us that he would soon be back to Albany, and I have delayed for that event.

In giving leases for years, much judgment is necessary in fixing the conditions so as to insure the preservation and im-

provement of the property, and the assistance of an experienced person is highly advisable, I would therefore distrust my own judgment in the business.

The remarks which you have made on this subject are judicious. I believe it would have been best had I requested you to agree on general terms for leasing, leaving particulars to be arranged on my arrival. Five years, I suppose, would be the least term that a farmer would bind himself for. Some arrangement should be made for relinquishment in case of sale within the term. Perhaps it might be to have the amount of compensation determined by arbitration, but on such subjects I should like to take the counsel of my friends. Leasing on shares is a mode to which I have always been adverse but I could not do otherwise. Whenever it can be done, it must be for a rent in cash and the taxes. The assessors would not lay them so heavy on tenants as they do on me.

Butler's place would now rent well. When I let it to him, I could not do otherwise than I did; I could get no one to take it. Other parts of the lowland might now, I should think, let to advantage separately. If there be any substantial settlers at Fall Creek, my ground there would be worth a handsome rent. The place I let to Cornelius Green will be valuable. He was to leave it in good meadow, fenced. His lease is nearly out; he wanted to have it prolonged, which I declined. I consider that as the best stand for a public house on my ground, and must be valuable. If I let it, it must be for cash rent and some agreement about the building at the end of the term. A good hotel there would command good business. You may tell Green, if he does not leave the place in the order stipulated, he will be called to account for it.

We will see what Quick's place will yield on share, but I am confident it will not be what I ought to have and that it will be to my interest to let, if I can, the whole for cash rent. Or the house and some ground with it, and the rest in one or more parcels. Baker's farm has yielded me very little; I have been obliged to leave it to his honesty to divide my part of the grain after he thrashed.

The same for Old Rairden: I have never made any agreement with him for the place for a longer time than one year.

In one or two instances where he cleared new ground and fenced I have let him have the crops of it for one or two years, and have made allowances in the use of the place, some years ago, for improvements in fences and about the low land. This I did also with Baker. All that I have ever had of Rairden has been but a trifle. I let it chiefly with the view of having the place improved without any expense of mine. When Green was my agent, he built the bridge without consulting me as indispensable.

Much, very much, requires to be arranged and I am at present much perplexed about it. Ithaca is now so settled that I should think there could not be much difficulty in disposing on lease or in fee of all my improved ground.

I do not recollect what the understanding is in Linn's agreement with Hoose about the orchard. That by itself I think might be let to advantage; whether it can be done before harvest, I do not know.

What is doing with the mill? It once had full custom and was profitable when I had a good miller in the house occupied by Hoose, which was built especially for a miller's home. I do not know what to do about it. If I could now sell the whole establishment with the seat for what the buildings have cost me, I would be as well off as otherwise. They will rot on my hands or absorb all the profits by repairs. The least I ought to have is \$3,000 and the place would be worth that to any man who would employ it to advantage.

I have now given you my general reflections on these matters. You must do the best you can and in that use your discretion, and obtain all the information you can to ascertain the best manner and the best terms I can get for selling or renting.

Thomas' lease obliges him to clear off timber and improve to a state of Good Meadow, the ground described in the lease. If he cuts a stick beyond it, he must be dealt with as a trespasser.

My agreement, as I mentioned before with Butler, gives no rights to heirs or assigns, and there is a part of it which contemplates equal pasturage. If it is expected that as much as the family pleases of the low lands is to be used without any allow-

ances to me for it, the place must be taken out of their hands as soon as may be, and this you may intimate to Daniel as my instructions. It will be proper, however, first to ask him to show you the agreement. I did not think of sending you the counterpart which I have. If a safe opportunity offers, I will do it.

11. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

4 June 1823

I would have written to you sooner since the receipt of your last, but that I expected before this to have seen you at Ithaca. But the weather has so frequently changed from pleasant to cold and disagreeable that I have put off from time to time on account of Mrs. DeWitt whom I proposed to take with me for the sake of her health. Her cough has continued so long and is sometimes so violent that I have serious apprehension of its terminating in consumption.

I have, therefore, concluded to put off my journey 'till summer weather should be fully settled and contemplate it for about the middle of this month.

I have heretofore not been able to preserve my orchard from being plundered, and the vagabonds in the village, I imagine, consider it as common property. It will be necessary to make some examples. You may, therefore, give out to that class generally that I have given instructions to have trespassers prosecuted without regard to age or sex. The difficulty has been to obtain information. I have a fine Bow apple tree from which I have never yet hand ripe fruit. One Sunday morning it had a number on it; after church there was not one, and the grain crop about it all trampled down. If Pat McGowen is caught in trespass, I will immediately eject him. I permitted his wife's former husband to have a blacksmith shop on the vacant spot there and the first time I saw the place after that there was a frame dwelling added; and he dying I permitted the widow, from motives of commiseration, to remain. When I come up I will see to this affair. Perhaps it may not be amiss for you to tell Pat that his continuance will depend on his watching the orchard and giving information of every invader.

I hope the cherries which will soon begin to ripen, will be preserved so that we may have a taste of them.

I have received a letter from Danl. Butler, proposing to me to put a stock of cattle on the farm equal to his own. This, however, is out of the question; the only way to get any share of the pasture this season will be to take in cattle of the villagers.

You may put in your cow or cows, if you keep any. I forget, as I intended to tell Wm. Linn if he has one, he might turn it in with Butler's. Will you tell him so?

Your arrangements, as far as you have informed me, are I believe, as good as could be made. As I now expect soon to be with you, I shall not at present suggest any. That will be best done by consultation on the spot.

I was in hopes of prevailing on Mr. Broadhead to go up with me; I think it would be of service to him, but he is again in the dumps and writes that he meditates a trip to the seaboard when he gets well enough to travel.

I hope you will see that the assessors do us justice.

12. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

21 October 1823

Miss McDonald, by whom I intend to send this, will start for Ithaca at 10 o'clock this morning so that after finishing my other writings I have not much time left for this letter.

If the enclosed leases are not strictly according to agreement, others can be given instead of them.

I annex a notice to Quick which I wish you to serve or caused to be served, with the note to him.

My intention was that you should execute contracts for the lots you are instructed to sell. You may therefore, as my attorney, execute one with Darius Curtis for Lot No. 23 of the lots north of Mill street, according to agreement. And also for any others designated for sale in the memorandum book.

I forgot to mention that H. Leonard owes me at least 1,000 gallons of whiskey, for the sale of which measures should have been taken. He is obliged to deliver it where I appoint. If you can sell to advantage at Ithaca, you may do so. I will inquire

the price here and let you know whether it would be advisable to send some down.

Danl. Butler some time ago requested me to instruct you to allow in his account for a shed his father built west of the dwelling house. It is right that he should be allowed the present value thereof. It was built after my contract with B. and for his accommodation.

In the appraisement of the cattle, etc., there ought not to have been any reference to the valuation formerly made. Their present value in market ought to have been the rule. The meaning was: I sold [Butler] my stock for what it was worth, and agreed when he quit the place to buy of him his stock on the farm for what it should be worth to the same amount with interest.

I have not time now to write more but shall do it in a day or two hence per mail. Let me know if the mill is a-going and what is done with it.

13. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

30 March 1824

I have too long neglected answering your letters. I shall not do so, I hope, hereafter. One reason is that I have been perplexed about any arrangements I could think of for the disposal or renting of my property & trusted that you being on the spot, would by finding out in some time the disposition of people without precipitation become the better enabled to come to the best conclusion. I am happy to learn that you have so far ascertained what can now be done for the best.

In the first place then, in regard to Quick's farm. As I told him before that I could not permit him or any other person to be my tenant who would not treat my agent with civility. In hopes that after the conversation in your Presence when he confessed that he was hasty in temper, he would have acted more civilly, I think I told him that as I considered him a good tenant I would even give him a preference on a money rent. He has made no offer to you, to whom I would have referred him if he had made an offer to me. I shall now tell him that since he has continued his abuse of you that he can at no rate have

the place when his lease expires, before which we will not be able to get him off.

You may there agree to let the place to some other suitable person. I would estimate the value of the lease then. Say that the house & barn cost \$400 to 500, the rent ought to be 10 percent that is \$40 or 50 and the ground in fence at \$3 or 3½ per acre. I do not know now the number of acres. It must be I think about 50 which would bring the rent to about \$200. If you cannot get that you may agree for less for a short term or consult me further.

The lot which Quick occupied next to Gere's is worth more than any in Bishop's lease. If well worked this season for corn & then a grain crop with grass seed, it will make the best meadow on the flats. To let it as shares for either grain or hay it would be worth at least \$4 an acre. It is worth as much for pasture as any lot I have. It ought to have a crop of corn this year & oats on the wettest parts.

I have made no promise to Quick for it beyond the last season. If you can get \$120 for the Baker farm it is perhaps as much as I can expect. The tenant ought to be responsible or give security. I have no confidence in Roots responsibility. He undertakes more than he can do with his means. In leasing it a stipulation might be made for making the bridge over the Inlet. The rent for the house & barn on the Montgomery place should be reckoned at \$40 and the farming ground (20 acres was inclosed in the old field) besides the addition since is surely worth at least \$2 per acre rent. In leasing that place stipulations ought to be made for inclosing and improving more ground. You have done the best you could with Butler's place. One stipulation in his lease was that he should leave the premises in good repair. The house was directed to be completely glazed before he took it which I believe was done (Wm. Linn knows), & is to be so left.

This and other matters ought to be examined before he leaves it. Wm. Linn & some other person should be asked to make the inspection. If Mr. Butler has permitted horse racing in my fields it is a most outrageous act for which he ought to be prosecuted. If he has permitted the fences to go down he by the terms of his lease (to leave the premises in good repair) has

not complied with his agreement & all these things should be examined by witnesses. I think I shall write to him on the subject and apprise him that an examination will be made.

In the spring of the year no cattle should be permitted to be in the fields and on the meadows. This is in fact Mr. Butler's duty 'til the lease expires, but at all events it will be well for you to see to it, and where he does not do it, to have it done at my expense. It was a particular stipulation in my contract with the gentleman for opening streets that they should not in their operations expose the fields to the intrusion of cattle. The streets are not to be opened 'til they are well made. And I do not see that Cayuga Street can be of use through my fields until it can be carried through to the lake or a communication be made from it to the Fall Creek village. It will require a great deal of gravel to make it passable at all times.

I approve of your lease to Mr. Wisner. Doctor Hutchinson, you say, wants the lot next to him for \$200. The Doctor did not have the character of good pay. He seemed to me to be a kind of Yankee Speculator. For instance, he offered to make the Dike when I first contemplated it. I think we had better hold for \$250 & in case of sales ask from \$30 to \$50 down at least. [Mr.] Brink holds his place merely at sufferance. The place was once offered to Quick. I forgot with how many acres. I think at \$13 per acre, paying the usual part down, but no contract was executed & nothing more was done. On the strength of this he went on. If you can prove that wood has been sold by the tenant he ought to be immediately ousted.

That place & the lot bought of Van Houten ought to go together on a cash lease. Does your lease of the Butler place take in all East of Cayuga Avenue to the Fall Creek? If the flats west of that are to be leased in parcels it will require some planning which cannot be well done here. I must see to it when I am up next. For this reason I think it will be best to let on shares for corn such parts as are let for it. When Green was my agent he stipulated that where corn fields were not well worked \$4 per acre should be paid instead of shares at the option of my agent. Some such stipulation I think would be proper in as much as I would be the loser to the amount of the bad culture on shares. The meadows not leased at Harvest

time may be let on shares for this year 'til better arrangements can be made. For the want of an active vigilant agent heretofore the division of shares has been pretty much left to the persons taking on shares & house. No doubt I have been much wronged. Mr. Green used to have them make the Hay in Stacks of as nearly equal size as might be & then they were chosen alternately.

Mr. Gere's contract for the field towards the inlet was \$50 per year. I think his time is out this year. Ask him if he wishes to continue the lease. If not look out for another good tenant. He was by the lease to leave it in hay and meadow. In the leases along that street are to be stipulations that I shall be allowed to sell the house lots which are to be fenced before possession. Some marked out house lots are along the north as well as the south side of that street. Those that may hereafter be sold on the North side must be described as exactly opposite to those on the South side.

You may sell the lot opposite to the one you sold to Ackerly for the same price. I think the lots in that quarter must rise in value. For whatever trade may come by land from the lake, on occasions of the cheaper conveyance by Water the great place of landing & loading must be immediately below the bridge and the lots that way must become valuable in consequence of their nearness to the great business that must there unavoidably be transacted. I consider the store lots along the inlet as the most valuable part of my property. In 20 years time they will be like the wharves in front of Albany lined with Canal boats. I have given the letting of them to L. Leonard. He finds his interest in monopolising the business at his own corner on the West side of the bridge. I must take the business out of his hands as soon as I can. I will bring him to an Account when I get up. His building next to Gere's lot is not authorized. When his lease is out he may take away his buildings. He may calculate on some advantages from me but he will be mistaken.

The S.E. corner of Gere's field with Leonard's I consider as a valuable stand and shall not sell it for a trifle. L. Leonard I perceive has an eye upon it, and wants to get it at a price per acre, which is out of the question. If it is sold it will be in a small Lot for a store or dwelling. The ground extending thence

North will do well for house lots for those who may have to do business on the inlet on the opposite shore lots. This must become a place of great business.

There are some cows about the Village well known, which will take down any fence as easy as a man could. I think some law should be made against them at the next town meeting. They ought to be obliged to have boards fastened to their heads so as that they might not be able to look forward. Will you think of it at the next town meeting and caucus a little to bring about such an ordinance? Some fencing stuff ought to have been taken out of the swamp North of the farm when frozen but I did not think of giving directions for it in season.

14. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

1 April 1824

I am glad to find that you have taken measures for providing a new waterwheel for the mill. I was aware that one would be absolutely necessary this season and intended to have preparations made for it. If the wheel has backwater, it is an unpardonable fault in Bennett. If I am not mistaken, it is particularly mentioned in my contract with Bates, but whether or not he had the right to take his level so high, I could compel him to lower his raceway all the way so as to completely clear my wheel. It is a great injury to the going of a mill. I wish you would speak to Bennett about it, and tell him in what light I consider it.

It is customary in mills always to have some good stuff prepared and kept in the mill for sealing, for repairing the rounds and cogs when necessary. It will not be amiss to look out for such stuff. When Old Cook was my miller he used to chalk on the posts in the mill every measure of toll he took or every bushel he ground, each kind of grain by itself. The account of which was thence taken and entered in my mill account. I should wish Mr. Starboard to keep such an account of work done by the mill.

I think your plan of bartering grain for boards good. Starboard is, I suppose, a judge of boards which on the delivery of

every parcel should be carefully inspected and an account of the number of feet taken and entered in a book.

If I lived in Ithaca I think I would keep the mill and by adding another pair of stones, have no doubt, I could make it more productive than the interest of the money I could now get for it. In the season when water is abundant I might employ the mill in flouring for the market. I could also, as others do, keep a flour store to sell to the villagers. But if a constant and full supply of common grist can be got it would be most profitable and much of that depends on the character of the mill and miller. I believe Starboard is as good a one as can be got. Mr. Herrick recommended him strongly and promised all his custom if I employed him.

The roof of the woodshed ought to be repaired before the new tenant takes possession of the place. The shed east of the barn is not of so much consequence now; if repaired, it may require something more than the mere roof to be repaired. That may be left until I come up when it will be necessary to have something done to the barn also, as well as the barn over the Inlet, which will have to be raised before any of the next harvest is put into it. Has the dung been taken away from the side where Baker used to keep it piled up to rot the boards and tanbark? I would have had the barn raised last summer but it was too much loaded.

I am sorry that you have not been able to sell the hay, much of it, I am afraid, will be spoiled. That in the barrack north of Cascadilla was put up in bad condition. I reproved Butler for it but the weather was such that, he said, he could not get it in better order. I am glad I have got rid of that family.

One stipulation in the lease was that the old fields should be successively broke up for grain so that they might be prepared for grass. This I could not get them to do since the old man's death; want of teams, etc., was the plea. If anything could be got by it, I would call them to account for it. It seems impossible to make tenants comply with their agreements without constantly watching them, and not even then.

In selling lots on the north side of Owego Street, they must not be bounded on the northerly by a street as I will not obligate myself to give a street there, parallel with Owego Street.

If I should hereafter lay out lots north of that, which will probably not be required for many years, it will then be time enough to open a street there.

The lot next east of Morgan's on the north side of the public square, is considerably broken. On account of its stand, however, it has its value. I think I ought to have \$150 for it. The lots between the public square and the Cascadilla on Cayuga Street you may sell for what you can get for them, some are worth more than others.

As for Harry Leonard, I shall have to settle with him by arbitration. He has trumped up charges against me at his own pleasure and miserably abused the distillery as well as the mill, for repairing which he has several charges against me. If you can sell any whiskey, you might get what you want for that purpose from him; he's not obliged to find the barrels.

I wish I could let the distillery for some other purpose. It would, I think, be a good building for a brewery, but as there is one now established it will not be wanted for that business. You mention cording and fulling: that business is also anticipated at the Dike by ———, besides there is no convenient place there for a range of tenter hook frames on which to dry cloth. It might do for some mechanics shop which would require a great deal of turning that might be done by water, as cabinetmaking. But it might be considered too much out of the way for such a business.

I wish I could sell the place occupied by Montgomery. A good farmer might there make a good living on 100 acres cut off by a north and south line from the Cascadilla to Fall Creek. Well cultivated, it would yield excellent crops; the soil is good. It ought to fetch \$20 per acre. By the by, the fields there that have had successive grain crops ought to be seeded down with grass seed.

I have now touched on every subject I can think of worth mentioning.

15. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

2 April 1824

I have had some very special thought about the land in the

south part of the location and doubt whether either you or I have acted correctly about it. You have my written obligation to dispose of it as you shall, given on your verbal declaration only, that it was the wish of the rest of the concerned.

If you and I should both die (and we do not know how soon that may be) it would be in the power of your heirs to defraud others and they would have no evidence by which they could establish their rights. I waited and ought to have had an express written authorization from the concerned to do what I have done, and they on common principles of prudence ought to have had the same writings from you to secure themselves in any contingency that may happen.

Considering the situation in which I have, from the beginning, stood in the affair, I cannot in my conscience go further without a formal written declaration (which I think you offered) of that trust you hold. Life and every thing else in this world is too uncertain to leave things without prompt execution, especially as the consequence may seriously affect the just rights of others. Every possible contingency which may effect events that are yet many years remote ought to be carefully guarded against. Instead of your brothers and sisters, between whom and you there may be perfect understanding, your heirs may be called up by their children to account for this property and perhaps mine may be involved in the business. In order to guard yourself, therefore, against every possible event, I think you ought not to delay getting express authority in writing from your brothers and sisters to act with full power as their attorney and you ought, for my satisfaction, to furnish me with aforesaid declaration of the trust for which my obligation was given to you. This need not be made a matter of notoriety by having them put on record, but retained to be presented when the occasion should require it, should that ever occur.

The declaration should recite the instrument I have given you and then state the trust for which it was intended. A duplicate of it might be delivered by you to one of your brothers. These steps, I think are absolute for your safety and the safety of others concerned, as well as of myself. I cannot feel satisfied without having something done in this manner to guard

the rights of all against every possible contingency in the evils which may follow from the loose state in which this business now stands. I cannot bear to think that the blame might be traced to an inconsiderate act of mine, and I think it your duty as well as mine, to do without delay whatever can now be done to guard against evil consequences.

Situated as you are, I think it would be prudent to keep a book and write in it a very particular account of every item relating to the premises—you or your heirs may have occasion for it, and I would also advise you not to sell any of the land, for you cannot know in which manner a court of chancery might oblige you to account for it. Your father would have been nearly ruined by a decree of Chancellor Lansing if the Court of Errors had not corrected it. To guard as far as possible against such things I have advised you to obtain letters of attorney from the concerned, particularly detailing your powers, and you ought not delay it because death may throw further embarrassment in your way.

When I receive your declaration in trust, I will send you a quit-claim deed, as I promised, for what you have sold. I told you when I was with you last that I would ask the advice of counsel. I have not yet mentioned the matter to any one; what I have written appears to me so obvious that you must agree with me in its propriety, and that the course pointed out is equally important to you and all concerned.

16. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

12 April 1824

I have not been able for some time to walk out. I am now again at my office and hunted up Butler's lease and agreement which I now enclose. It had been accidentally wrapped up in a paper of a different endorsement which prevented me from finding it before when I intended to send it to you.

Among so many other things as I wrote you about before, I forget to advert to your proposal about the lots west of Quick's. I have been hesitating how to lay out lots there. Where lots have streets at both sides, I have laid out the largest 264 feet calculating them for future subdivision by the owners so that

the fronts might have two fronts. In other cases, I have made the lots only 200 feet deep. It is not probable that a street will be required south of & parallel with Green Street.

I would not wish to obligate myself to give a continuation of the street west of these lots as it would not be necessary unless building lots were laid out further south. Under these restrictions, I would be willing to accede to your proposal.

Mr. Linn wrote me about L. Leonard's failure and advised an ejectment on his distillery lot. I do not see of what use that can be to me as I am obliged to many on payment of the considerations. Leonard owes me for monies he has received on the store lots on the Inlet. Will you attend to that and do your best to recover what is due. I shall also write to Mr. Linn.

As the Legislature is just adjourning, I must look out for conveyance for this.

17. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

2 May 1827

I mentioned to you some time ago that I expected Quick had sowed wheat on the cornfield next to Bishop's, which you informed me had not been done. I intended to have grass seed on it in March, but as that could not be done, I now wish that field to be leveled, by splitting the (corn) hills with the plow, and well harrowed as soon as the ground will admit it. And then the two bushels of timothy seed which I sent up last fall be sown on four acres of the ground measured off for that purpose. On the remaining part of the ground, redtop seed at the rate of two bushels to the acre.

In Orange County, I am informed, they use one bushel to the acre, but my object is to make an effectual experiment of very thick sowing. As the redtop seed, as it is used, is mixed with its chaff, I would prefer even three bushels to the acre. No grain or clover seed [is] to be sown with these grass seeds.

My informant says that redtop seed can be had in New York for one dollar per bushel. If you will write me immediately, should you not be able to get it in Ithaca, I will have it procured without delay from New York. At all events, let me hear from you on the receipt of this.

I expect to be with you later this month. Your brother, the doctor, was here a few days ago, fat and hearty.

18. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

18 October 1827

I have this morning shipped you on board the *Sea Flower* a tierce of redtop seed and a box of horse chestnuts. I wish you to let Mr. Smith prepare for the redtop the ground adjoining what has been sown with the timothy seed I sent up. It ought to be put in the best order this fall and as early in the spring as possible when the seed must be sown.

In Orange County they allow a bushel to the acre. I had intended to allow a larger quantity but am advised that as the grass has a slender stalk, if the seed is sown too thick they will be too feeble. I think I would risk to use some-what more than what is used in Orange, say $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels to the acre.

The horse chestnuts must be placed as soon as may be, before they mould or dry. To prevent moulding, the horse chestnuts ought to be immediately taken out of the box & put into or covered with earth. As there is an abundance of them in the box, you may distribute a considerable proportion of them among those who will attend to the raising of them. You may select some of my ground for a nursery in which to plant them. In 3 or 4 years they will be fit to transplant, and if I live I propose to surround the public square which I have laid out, with the trees which, when full grown, will make a beautiful appearance, especially when in bloom. Interspersed among others along Cayuga and Aurora Avenues, they would produce a pretty effect.

I wish you would find leisure now and then to write to me, giving accounts of what is done or doing about the village, especially in matters of my concern.

What measures have been taken for having the woods along the Inlet cleared? Mr. Bishop wanted some acres which he offered to clear completely of all brush, etc., for use of the wood other than such trees as might be reserved for fencing stuff, lumber, etc. As he will do well what he undertakes, I am disposed to favor his offer. If you fell the wood by the acre or

cord, it will require considerable expense afterward to clear away the rubbish and prepare the ground for grass or grains. Think of these things. I should like to have that ground early next season put into a condition to be seeded.

Have you made any sales since I left you? Have Thompson and Ridgeway made up their minds whether they will buy or lease the lot on the Inlet, \$400 purchase or \$20 annual rent?

Have you done anything for plotting correctly the ground with the waters where Mr. Mack wished to make an establishment?

When I was leaving Ithaca, Starboard informed me that he had sold wheat to the amount of about \$600. Two-thirds of which would be my due, which I requested of him, and he promised to deposit on my account in the Ithaca bank. I have not heard from him since. Will you speak to him about it?

I owe Mr. Tillotson for a foot bench in the church and another small thing, for which I have not paid him. Will you do it? When I settled my bill at the hotel, I forgot the shoe black; will you give him a dollar on W. Linn's and my account—the labour is worthy of his reward.

As we neglected to affix prices for the lots I hold for sale, you may dispose of them at such prices as you may judge to be reasonable.

Has anything been done towards clearing the channel or the Inlet? Is the steamboat dock done? Are any other improvements going on at the port? Etc., etc., etc., etc.

19. SIMEON DEWITT to *Francis A. Bloodgood at Ithaca*

7-20 January 1831

I some time ago received a petition, subscribed by Alvah Beebe for you, regarding a deed for Lot No. 33, southside of Green Street. As soon as convenient, I executed the deed requested and had the execution proved. I have waited for a convenient opportunity to send it, which is now presented by Mr. Woodcock, who tells me he will start this evening for home.

This lot is charged \$150 and credited with \$18.50 as the proportion of the 16 lots on which a payment was made to my son, of \$300 on the 1st. Feby 1829. The residence \$131.25, with two

years' interest amounts to \$149.50, which Mr. Beebe says will be sent as I direct.

I avail myself of this occasion to send you a list of arrears of interest and rent which was due and ought to have been paid to me when I was last in Ithaca and which I wish you to use your endeavors to collect as soon as may be. For the rent of these payments I am now paying interest on a loan from the State Bank here for my necessities. I would particularly solicit your attention to the interest due on the contract of Bridges for the woolen factory lot on which nothing has been paid for four years. I dunned the tenant who told me he was in treaty with Mr. Tallmadge of Poughkeepsie, who was then at Ithaca, to aid him, and thus put me off. You may tell him that if payment is further delayed I will resort to legal measures.

One year's rent (\$400) is due (1st of this month) on Mr. Livingston's lease of the mill, house and appendages. For your receiving this, I will enclose an order. Also an order for the dividend that may be due on my Ithaca and Owego Turnpike stock, for which no opportunity afforded last fall.

Jacob Starboard has not accounted to me for receipts at the mill for September, November and December 1829. Although he must have received my note last fall, requesting him to account. I did not see him during the time I was last season in Ithaca. I had before requested him to deposit what was due to me in the Ithaca bank to my credit. You may inform him if he does not soon pay what is due to me, I will make him render his account in a Court of Chancery. Should he offer an account and payment to you, give him a receipt *on account* and not *in full*—after what has passed I would do right to bring him at once into court without further notice.

For some days before I left Ithaca, Mr. Ryanson was too sick to do business or he probably would have paid what was due me from him to me.

The hemp factory and the old stillhouse must be broken up, and by no means must a fire be permitted in it. I do not know the condition in which this matter now is, further than that I can expect no emolument from it. The only use to which this building can be applied is that which was suggested by Mr. Livingston which is to make a plaster-grinding mill of it. If

nothing better can be done with it, it ought to be sold for lumber and taken away.

Levi Leonard is now considerably in debt to me; he promised to call on me and to settle accounts, in which he failed. When you see him, I wish you to tell him, as my agent, that he will deposit what he owes me in the Ithaca Bank to my credit, as I am in need of the money. He knows the amount, and send me the certificate of deposit.

What monies you may receive for me, you may deposit in the bank of Ithaca and from time to time advise me of it. I can get it cashed here for $\frac{1}{2}$ [of one] percent discount, which is preferable to the hazard of sending it by casual opportunity.