

# THE OSSINING HISTORICAL REGISTER

*Preserving, Protecting & Publishing Ossining's History*



SUMMER 2013

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## ***President John Wunderlich's Message:***

*On April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013, the Village Bicentennial kick-off event at the Ossining Public Library featuring a historic map and photo show from the archives of the Ossining Historical Society Museum was met with great enthusiasm. The Library Gallery was packed to the brim, and parking was three blocks out. We could not have asked for a better way to start this monumental date for our village. You may still view much of this show at the Municipal Building at 16 Croton Avenue, as well as at the Mahopac National Bank on Church Street in Ossining.*

*The OHSM has been very involved in every aspect of this year's Bicentennial events. In May, the Ellis Place Historic House Tour sponsored by the Bicentennial Committee and the Mahopac National Bank, which was a huge success featuring ten houses and ending with a reception at Dana White's house on Ellis Place. In June, we sponsored the Holy Ossining Tour during the Village Fair and the Dale Cemetery Tour on July 14. An upcoming event is the re-dedication of the double arches on July 20th on the recently-restored promenade. There will be music, refreshments and guest speakers. Time to be announced. Thank you to Miguel Hernandez for managing the logistics and coordination of all our programs.*

*The Sparta Cemetery is in process of being transferred to Dale Cemetery and the Town of Ossining. We feel that they will be better able to take care of this historic property and relieve us of the responsibility. We have reserved the right to install a granite slab on the Leatherman's grave site which will have his story carved on it.*

*The Museum Fair will be held on Saturday, September 7, on the grounds of the museum. This is always a great time for our hunter/gatherer members. The OHSM Annual Dinner and Silent Auction is scheduled for Friday, October 18, 2013. Last year we moved the venue to Sleepy Hollow Country Club - this gives us more room for the silent auction and provides greater seating capacity. Many Silent Auction items have been donated already, but more are needed. Please let us know if you have antiques or curiosities that you would like to donate - keep in mind they will be tax deductible. This year we will raffle a framed print of our Robert Havell Jr's painting, "Looking North to Croton Point". The lucky winner will be announced at the dinner. Raffle tickets will be \$20 each, and will be mailed with the dinner invitations.*

*I wish to thank our members for their continued support and all the volunteers who help to make our programs and museum so successful.*

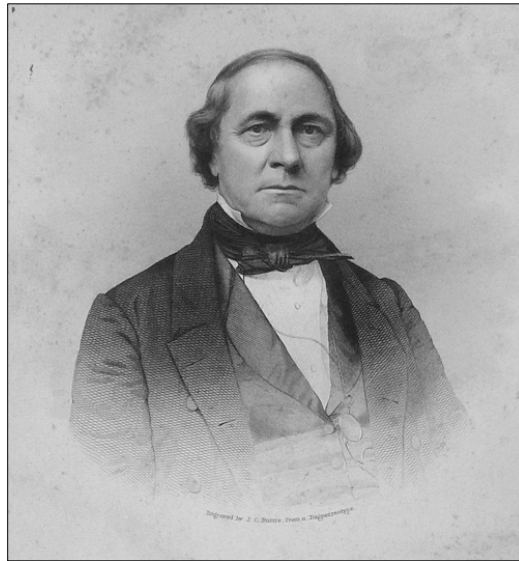
*John C. Wunderlich*

**WELCOME ON BOARD:** On behalf of all the members of the OHSM it is my pleasure to welcome the following new members:

Terry Brown, Marie Pirelli, Le Roy Smith, Stanley Telega

**IN MEMORIAM:** Our condolences go to the families of Reverend Gordon Anderson, William G. Paddock, William Lent and Edwin Bright, four longtime members of the Society. We shall miss them all very much.

**CORRECTION:** In the last newsletter it was incorrectly stated that James W. Fagan was a grandson of Admiral John Worden. He is related, distantly, but was not a grandson.



*Aaron Ward*

## THE PAPERS OF AARON WARD

BY NORM MACDONALD

### BACKGROUND:

Recently an archive of letters and documents of Aaron Ward was generously donated to the Museum by Edward C. Swift, a descendant of Aaron Ward. Ward was one of Sing Sing's most prominent early citizens.

The collected papers in the Ward archives total nearly 900 letters and documents, and most of the letters are hand written. Many are from individuals seeking Ward's assistance in securing

government appointments to various posts locally and country wide. Other letters are from candidates running for office, seeking Ward's support. Throughout the collection are letters from prominent and well known individuals that lived during the nineteenth century. Included in this extensive archive are many small footnotes and comments on important historical events that are part of United States history.

The collection is loosely bound in book form and covers the years 1830 to 1867. Our plans call for scanning the entire collection and placing each document in a separate sleeve. A new index will be created, and when this is accomplished, the collection will be opened for research. If you wish to contribute to this preservation effort financially, you may send your donation to the Society at 196 Croton Avenue, Ossining NY 10562.



*The Ward mansion on South Highland Avenue, where the new addition of Ossining High School now stands*

## AARON WARD: HISTORY

Aaron Ward was born in Sing Sing, New York on July 5, 1790. He died on March 2, 1867 in Georgetown, Washington DC. He had an exceptional career holding public office first as District Attorney for Westchester County from 1819 to 1822, then as a United States congressman from 1825 to 1843. A Democrat, he was involved in politics during his entire adult life. A lawyer, he had offices at Sing Sing and was active in the affairs of the community. Ward

was widely known both in Westchester and beyond, and had a political and professional network that included Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan, both Presidents of the United States. He served as a Lieutenant in the War of 1812, later attaining the rank of Captain. He continued to serve in the State Militia, achieving the rank of Major General. Ward was one of the original founders of the Dale Cemetery and served as its first President. His daughter, Virginia Gadsby Ward married George Brandreth, the eldest son of Benjamin Brandreth, the owner of Ossining's well known pill factory. In 1835 he built a magnificent mansion on South Highland Avenue, called "Careswell" that was constructed of stone quarried at the Sing Sing quarry. The building was an exact replica of Robert E. Lee's mansion at Arlington Cemetery. The mansion survived until 1937 when it was demolished to make way for an addition to Ossining High School.

## THE LETTERS: HIGHLIGHTS

Following are some brief sketches describing a number of the documents:

PASSPORT dated April 12, 1843 for Aaron Ward, stamped approximately 30 times in various European countries and signed by Daniel Webster.

DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT number 738 dated October 18, 1843 for Aaron Ward as a representative of the legation of the United States to Great Britain.

Obituary for Samuel Youngs dated 1839. Samuel Youngs, a prominent Westchester resident, was a guide for General Washington during the American Revolution. He held several public offices in the county and was one of the individuals Washington Irving used to create the character of Ichabod Crane in his story, "The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow." Ward gave the eulogy at the funeral for Youngs. Later when Ward became the first President of the New Dale cemetery in 1851, he had Youngs remains removed to Dale Cemetery and buried there as the first interment in the new cemetery.

Letter from Samuel Bleeker of Newtown Long Island, dated Jan 1831 to Aaron Ward. Bleeker, a revolutionary war veteran who served under the immediate command of General Washington details firsthand the actions of the Northern Units of the Continental Army in New York State and speaks of Benjamin Arnold and Ethan Allen.

Letter dated February 11, 1842 to Aaron Ward from Benjamin Brandreth requesting a copy of the United States Census. Brandreth was a well-known patent medicine manufacturer with a factory in Sing Sing. He became a close friend of Ward and eventually his oldest son married Ward's daughter. The census was probably the 1840 census which Brandreth would use in planning advertising.

Letter dated July 23, 1842 to Aaron Ward from William L Marcey. Mr. Marcey was Governor of New York State from 1833 to 1838. Asks Ward for his comments on the upcoming election and his thoughts on what the Whig Party might do. Mt. Marcey in the Adirondack Mountains of New York is named for this governor.

Letter from B.A. Cowdey to Aaron Ward dated March 9, 1842. The letter refers to the Croton Dam Cases scheduled to be heard the first Monday of April at Bedford, NY. Asks Ward for a list of witnesses. He will attend the trial with the chair of the Croton Aqueduct Committee. He wants

to have the witnesses subpoenaed. He mentions Judge Talmage and expects the proceedings to take one week.

Letter dated December 21, 1841 at Sing Sing, NY to Ward from George Cartwright who was the Croton Dam engineer. He discusses purchase prices for properties owned by Mrs. Beekman and Mr. Van Wyck along the Croton River.

Letter, dated December 21, 1841 Eastchester, Westchester County from James Hall to Ward asking Ward's help in securing payment to the contractors for supplying marble for the basement of the New York Custom House. The marble most likely came from the Tuckahoe Marble Quarry.

Letter dated May 17, 1842 to Ward from Daniel Fullmard in which he suggests changes to the Croton Aqueduct Judgements.

Letter dated May 21, 1842 to Ward from N. Dyckman indicating the plaintiffs in the case wanted the court to agree to proposed settlements to contractors on the Croton Dam. A very lengthy letter that mentions Judge Ruggles and Judge Talmage.

Letter dated May 23, 1842, New York City from J.J. Jindall . Asks Ward to send him reports on the custom house. Says the city is in a "horrible situation as it relates to the organization of the Common Council. "We are in a fair way" to have Croton water brought to the city in July.

Letter dated March 12, 1842 to Ward from H. Harrison, New York City. He indicates the Vice Chancellor has appointed Henry White of Yorktown, Edwin Crosby of North Salem and Nathaniel Bayles of Greenburg as appraisers. They have offered Mrs. Beekman \$130 for a piece of property at Tarrytown for a waste weir.

Letter dated May 30, 1842 to Ward from George Sherwood outlining many reasons why the current postmaster at Sing Sing should be replaced by himself. The letter is very comical. Postmasters were federally appointed as they are now.

Letter dated Jan 18, 1842 to Ward, from Samuel Morris, President of the New York City Water Commission. In it he lists the names of the owners of land and water rights on the Croton River. They are Abigail Fause, John & James Bailey, Soloman Thompkins, Robert Thompkins, John Thompkins, Pierre Van Cortlandt & others, Amelia Beekman, Phillip Van Cortlandt and others.

Letter dated August 2, 1842 from Elam Lynds in Syracuse to Ward. Lynds asks Ward's support for an appointment to the staff at Sing Sing prison. Lynds oversaw the establishment of the prison at Sing Sing in 1824-25.

Letter dated October 30, 1856 to Ward from Samuel Sloan, President of the Hudson River Railroad indicating the Board of Directors of the railroad have voted Aaron Ward lifetime free passage on the railroad.

Letter dated Jan 9, 1853 to Ward from George Morris indicating he had spoken to General Winfield Scott who had inquired about Ward's efforts on Scott's behalf. Morris urges Ward to do all he can to influence members of Congress to pass the bill to promote Scott.

Letter to Colonel George P. Moses from Ward indicating his efforts in Congress to promote the resolution favoring honors for General Winfield Scott's promotion to Lt. General. Scott was a hero of the war of 1812 and was a national icon. The letter was dated 1854. The bill passed in congress three to one.

Letter, dated January 9, 1854 to Ward from General Winfield Scott thanking Ward for all of his efforts on his behalf. The letter is handwritten. Scott became a military advisor to Abraham Lincoln during the early years of the Civil War.

Letter dated February 4, 1853 from "McBoucke" to Ward indicates he has a letter from "S. Beardsly Esq." who interviewed General Pierce (then the president elect of the United States) on the cabinet appointment of "Dickenson" from Vermont as Secretary of State. Indicates Pierce was positive in his reactions.

Letter dated January 28, 1864 to Ward from United States historian Benson Lossing thanking Ward for sending him Ward's book "Around the Pyramids" Ward had travelled extensively to Europe and Egypt recording his travels in the above book. Lossing also relates his feelings as to the effect the Civil War was having on the country.

Letter dated February 16<sup>th</sup> 1857 from "A.D. Banks" in Philadelphia to Ward. Indicates he saw "Mr. Buchanan" (then president- elect of the United States) and spoke with him for one half hour concerning Cabinet appointments. Indicates Buchanan's inclination is for "Walken". He does not indicate which post he refers to.

Letter dated 1854 (no month or day) from Ward to his daughter Fannie. He indicates he had dined with the President (Franklin Pierce) at the White House a week ago Tuesday and met the President's other guest, the Papal Nuncio from the Vatican. He describes his conversations with the Nuncio and relates the Nuncio's background.

Throughout the collection are assorted Tammany Hall printed documents having to do with Democratic political issues.

Letter dated March 22, 1845 from Paul Allen to Ward requesting to meet with him to discuss the application for a charter for a railroad from New York City to Albany, the exact route to be determined by surveys.

Letter dated August 25, 1847 from "M. Anlick" written on board the USS Ship "Potomac" at Vera Cruz, Mexico. He enclosed a sketch of the famous castle of San Juan De Ulua. The writer indicates he had promised Ward's relative, George Burnett, the sketch. Burnett was publisher of a New York magazine. The sketch was not with the letter.

Letter dated August 31, 1853 to Ward from Benjamin Brandreth. Brandreth had served in the New York State Senate from 1850-1851. Brandreth indicates his chances to be nominated for the Senate again are slim. He indicates "Mr. Congers" from Rockland County is seeking the nomination as a Democrat.

Letter dated June 18, 1857 from Ward to his daughter Fannie Randall. Three pages with much detail describe his attendance at the celebration of the opening of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad from Cincinnati to St. Louis. He relates his observations of his travel throughout the Midwest.

Letter dated March 15, 1857 from General Lewis Cass, a veteran of the War of 1812. Cass was also a United States Senator from 1849 to 1857. His handwriting is very poor and further efforts to translate the letter are needed.

Letter, dated September 30, 1864 from Horatio Seymour, Governor of New York State to Ward. He thanks Ward for his letter and indicates his "advices" from all parts of the country are encouraging. (He is probably referring to the state of the Civil War).

Letter dated January 28, 1857 to President-elect James Buchanan from Gideon J. Tucker. In this two and one half page letter, he asks to be appointed to the post of "Surveyor" of the Port of New York.

Letter dated November 1, 1865 from Joseph W. Moulton of Roslyn, Long Island asking Ward for details concerning the service of General Wool in a battle during the war of 1812 near Chateaugay Woods in Franklin County, New York. The battle took place in 1814 and the letter includes much detail.

Letter dated March 21, 1857 from Benjamin Bailey of Connecticut. Asking Ward to write letters to President Buchanan, General Cass and Senator Thompson supporting him for appointment as Governor of the territory of Kansas. He indicates Benjamin Brandreth has written a strong letter of support. Kansas at the time had not yet been admitted to the Union.

Letter dated August 19, 1858 detailing Ward's service in 1813 when U.S. troops invaded Canada. Much detail here written by an eye witness, "S.Cox". The detail was sent to the New York Home Journal whose editor was George Morris.

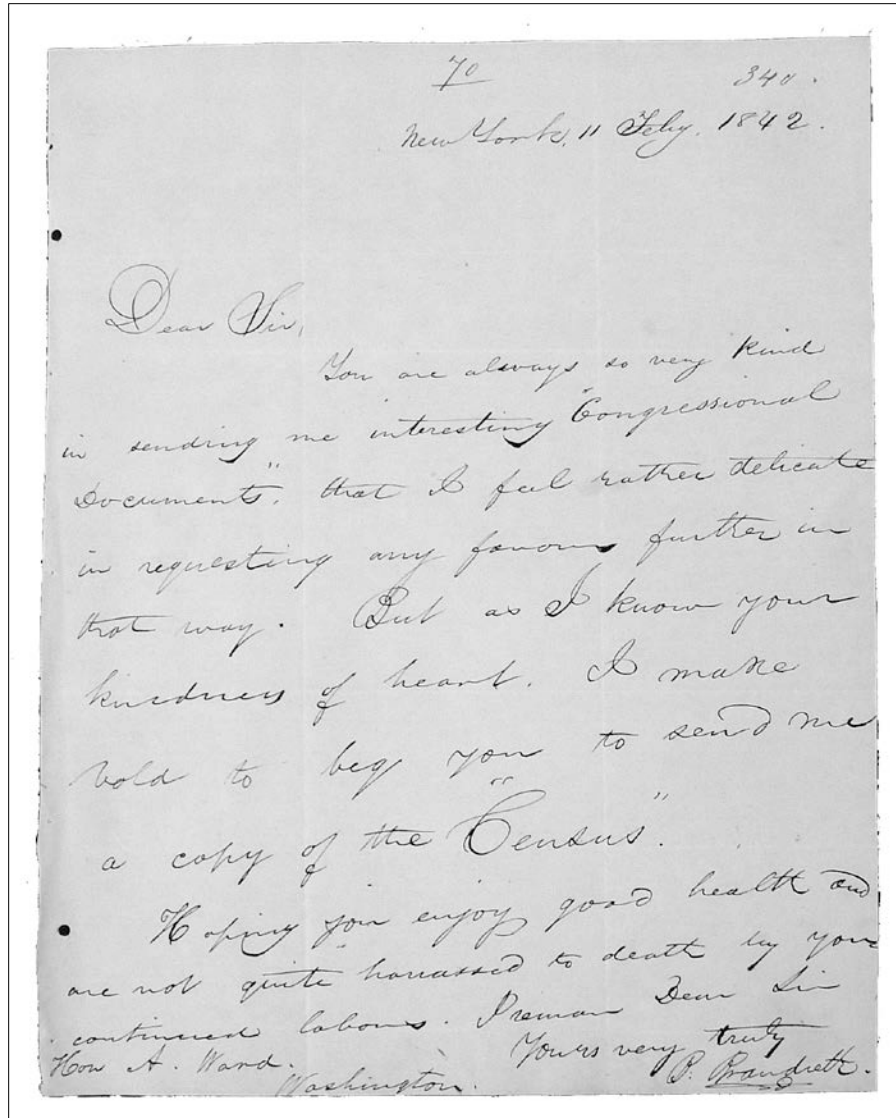
Letter dated August 14, 1863 to Ward from Benson Lossing in which Lossing comments on Ward's book "Around The Pyramids". Lossing hopes for "equal rights" in the United States. The letter was written at the height of the Civil War.

Letter, dated March 18, 1863 to Ward from Benson Lossing asking Ward for any details of the 1813 war and the charge on Canada that may not be in current books. Indicates he will travel to Kentucky and Tennessee to gather information on the war. Attached is a printed resume of all areas Lossing would like information on. On the back is a handwritten detail of all events by Ward, that includes much information. Several other letters from Lossing are included on the same subject.

Letter dated Jan 9, 1854 to Ward from General Winfield Scott thanking Ward for all of his efforts on his behalf. The letter is hand written.

## FEATURED LETTERS

Featured here are two of the more significant letters with their translations. The first is from Benjamin Brandreth, the owner of Ossining's pill factory and the second from William L. Marcey, Governor of New York State from 1833 to 1838.

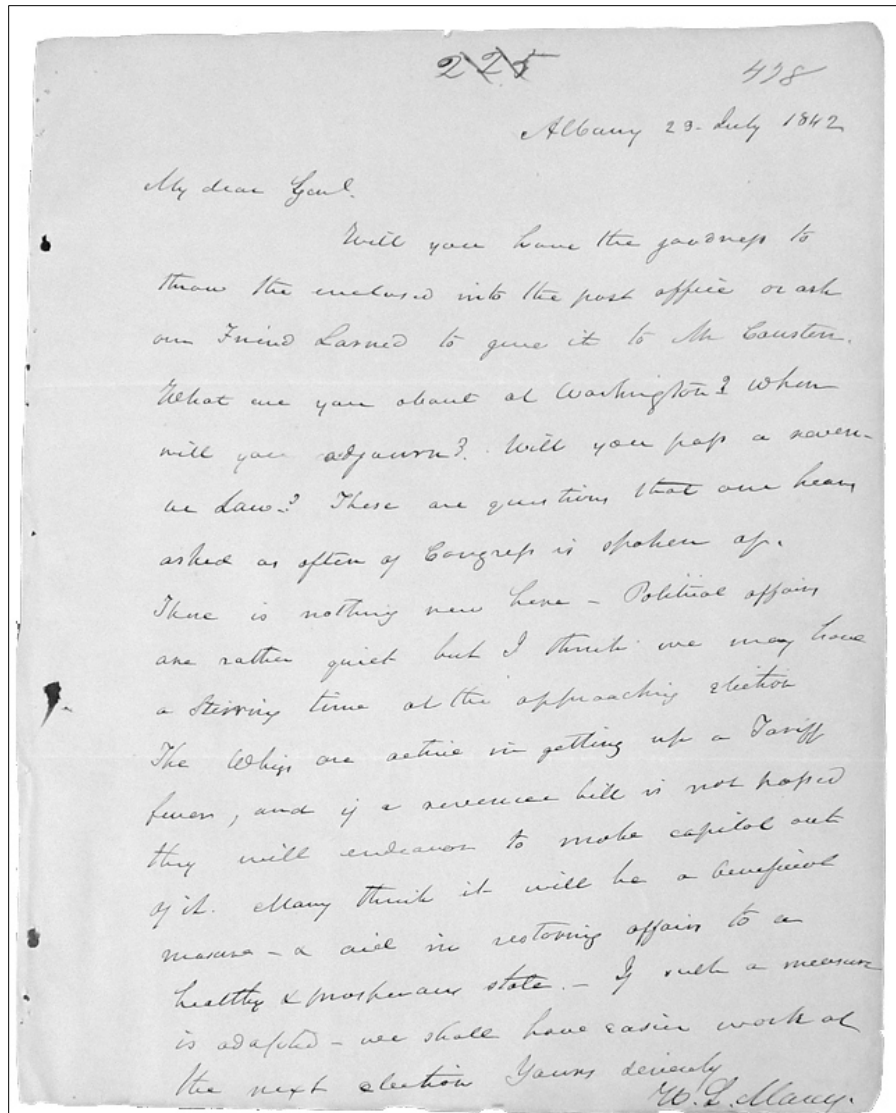


Dear Sir,

You are always so very kind in sending me interesting "Congressional Documents", that I feel rather delicate in requesting any favours further in that way. But as I know your kindness of heart, I make bold to beg you to send me a copy of the "Census"

Hoping you enjoy good health and are not quite harassed to death by your continued labours. I remain Dear Sir  
 Yours very truly, B Brandreth

Hon A. Ward  
 Washington



My dear Genl,

Will you have the goodness to throw the enclosed into the post office or ask Friend Larned to give it to Mr. Causten.

What are you about at Washington? When will you adjourn? Will you pass a revenue law? These are questions that are being asked as often as Congress is spoken of.

There is nothing new here - Political affairs are rather quiet but I think we may have a stirring time at the approaching election. The Whigs are active in getting up a Tariff fever and if a revenue bill is not passed they will endeavor to make capitol out of it. Many think it will be a beneficial measure and aid in restoring affairs to a healthy and prosperous state. If such a measure is adopted we shall have easier work at the next election. Yours Sincerely W.L. Marcey



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