

Oct. 17, 1927

T H E M E M O I R S

Of

S T E P H E N A L L E N

(1767 — 1852)

Sometime Mayor of New York City, Chairman of the
(Croton) Water Commissioners, etc., etc.

Edited, with an Introduction and Notes

by

JOHN C. TRAVIS

One of his great-grandsons.

Died April 17, 1931, New York City
son of late Martin V. Travis
and of Caroline Middlebrook Hart
(the daughter of Mary Ann Allen)

New York City.

1927

Transcribed from the microfilm
"Memoirs of Stephen Allen (1762 - 1852)"
part of
The New York Historical Society's collection
170 Central Park West
New York, NY 10024

Copyright 1927
New York Historical Society
Permission to print for non-commercial
use granted April 10, 2012

PREFACE

When I first took up the hobby of genealogy, I had a lot of success until I started on the Allen family. My grandmother, Edith Day Allen had left a written genealogy of her family, the Days, and had put together as much of her husband, Asa A. Allen's, family as she could gather from talking to him and his parents. It only went back to John Allen, his grandfather, and that was the end of the line. John had settled in Sutton, Brome County, Quebec after the Revolutionary War, receiving 200 acres in a patent from George III of England in 1802. He had a family of 12 children. She had, also, inserted an extra generation, a Leonard, because she had heard her in-laws talk about "Lany" so much. Lany turned out to be John Allen's wife, Magdalena Andrew.

Edith Day Allen thought that he had descended from the Allens of Salem, Massachusetts and like most Allen families are told, was certain he was in some way related to Ethan and Ira Allen. I searched New England records for several years and then wrote to the Brome County Historical Society to see if they had any information. They sent me copies of local publications and said that John Allen had come from New York State, had enlisted in the American Revolutionary forces, been captured in his first battle and on the way to Canada to prison, had persuaded his captors he would fight for them, so became part of the Loyalist troops fighting for the British. I continued my search in that direction only finding that John Allen was a very common name.

One day while exploring the Internet, I came across a John Allen with a family of children with the same names as some of John's. John had a William, a Stephen and a Sabina; Sabina was not a common name. This family had John as the father, Sabina his wife, and their first son, John, with the right birthday. He had younger brothers of William and Stephen. I contacted the person who had posted this family, Darryl Bridson and will be forever grateful to Darryl for leading me to John Allen's family. Darryl was also the person who told me about this manuscript, "The Memoirs of Stephen Allen". While the manuscript has a little genealogy, I have found it fascinating from a historical point of view. Stephen Allen tells us about life under British rule during the Revolutionary War and the politics of New York City and New York State in the first half of the 19th century. He was instrumental in the beginnings of so many things that we associate with New York. We can perhaps overlook the fact he barely mentions that he has children, and he was father of 17 of them. He reports that he last saw his brother, John, when he marched off with the Army. His family never heard from him again and assumed he had been killed in battle. It will forever be a mystery as to why he never contacted his family.

It is always hard to decide when editing an old document how much you should correct as you look for typos, missed words and other errors. There were no rules for spelling, capitalization and punctuation in the early nineteenth century, and with little in the way of formal education, Stephen's vocabulary is amazing. Therefore, this document is presented essentially as it was written with only a few changes for clarity and consistency. Some of the spelling has been modernized to get rid of all the red lines that Word injects.

I would like to thank Darryl Bridson for his assistance in breaking down my Allen "brick wall" and my daughter, Karyne Dyer, for her editing skills.

Mildred Welch Clough

John's great, great granddaughter

Stephen's great, great grandniece

INTRODUCTION

Stephen Allen, who was to acquire a competency as a sail-maker, was born in New York City on the 2nd day of July, 1767, without a cent. He retired from business on the 1st day of November 1825, and lost no time in embarking upon a whole series of letters to an imaginary correspondent, which as a whole he refers to either as his Autobiography or his Memoirs. Whatever it is, it became during the next twenty years, first a capital picture in retrospect of a sturdy young American making his way, and thereafter a contemporary portrait of an affluent citizen devoting himself largely to public life and the public good. Mr. Allen died on the 28th day of July, 1852.

It is submitted that these letters explain themselves and that very little editorial work is necessary, other than a liberal use of the blue pencil, for the autobiographer was copious, most copious, especially on the subject of the introduction of Croton water into the City of New York, in connection with which he played a leading role. Accordingly, thousands of words have been excised and pages here and there have been summarized in intermediate paragraphs enclosed in square brackets.

The text followed is corrupt, but the best to be had. Family tradition affirms that the original letters, in Mr. Allen's own hand, were copied by a dutiful descendant, who being human presumably did err. This copy in turn was copied by the editor's mother, who also was human, no doubt. However, she wrote a legible hand, and from her copy an excellent stenographer typed the set of letters on which this volume is based, so that the damage to the text was done in all likelihood by copyist No.1. Meanwhile the original set has disappeared and comparison cannot be made.

As indicated above, Mr. Allen will speak for himself, and the editor, a great-grandson, sees no occasion to sing the old boy's praise; but it is no reflection on the comprehensiveness of

Mr. Allen's sketch to introduce the reader to the mature man as seen through the eyes of responsible contemporaries. The child is the father of the man and this child made a good job of it; but undoubtedly he produced an article free from all trace of the exquisite.

(A) Thurlow Weed was for many years a power in upstate politics. Mr. Allen and he were never on the same side of the political fence, indeed Mr. Allen was Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall, 1813-1814, yet Mr. Weed had this to say about him in his own Autobiography, at p. 400.

"In 1826 the State relapsed, the Democracy carrying the Assembly by a large majority. The city delegation was divided politically. Stephen Allen then made his first appearance in the legislature. Mr. Allen was a self made man, with a clear head and sound heart. He brought industry, intelligence, and integrity with him into the Assembly, leaving a good record behind him. Mr. Allen, though cold and stern in look and manner, relaxed and warmed in conversation. He enjoyed quiet, cozy evenings with a friend over a single glass of toddy. How pleasantly the remembrance of those social evenings at Cruttenden's comes back over the chasm of dead and buried years! (Cruttenden's, later Congress Hall, near the Capital). Mr. Cruttenden was of a refined, cultivated, genial nature. At his table all the intellectually great assembled. Its history - its after-dinner conversations, rich, racy, and sparkling - should have been preserved."

(B) The Rich Men of 1822, quoted in a Century of Banking in New York, 1822-1922, by Henry W. Lanier at p. 93.

"Allen, Stephen

A sail maker by trade. Elected Assistant Alderman of the Tenth Ward in 1817 and 1818; this was followed by many other offices. He acquired a large fortune in commercial pursuits to which he devoted himself for many years after giving up his trade. Was concerned with banking and insurance companies. He kept a large "duck store" on Liberty Street, valued at \$5,000. Paid taxes on \$15,000 personal property in 1820; was a Director of the Mechanics Bank and was Mayor of New York in 1822."

(C) Wealth and Biography of the Wealthy Citizens of New York City - 6th Edit. - 1845.

"Allen, Stephen

\$400,000.

A man who without money, without family connections and without education, has made his way to independence in fortune, and to high public stations. He began life as a poor sailor boy, afterwards was a sailmaker, and finally kept one of the largest sail-lofts in the city. In his business, he was industrious, scrupulously exact, and rigid in justice. By his reputation for integrity, he procured large accessions to his business. He was made Mayor of the city in 1821, and re-elected for two successive years, and afterwards a Senator of the State, and a State Commissioner of the Croton Water Works, in which capacity his powerful influence did much toward the success of this great enterprise.

Mr. Allen is an energetic and decided man, always adopting a policy of his own, and carrying it out with great self-reliance. He is just, but not generous; and in mind and manners rude and unpolished. At the time of difficulty in the New York Life Insurance and Trust Co. he was made the President."

(D) The Diary of Philip Hone.

See various uncomplimentary allusions. Mr. Hone and Mr. Allen were pall bearers at the funeral of William Henry Harrison in New York City in 1841 (Vol.II, p. 75) and again at the funeral of John Quincy Adams in March, 1848 (Vol. II, p.346) but Mr. Hone on a certain occasion in 1834 had seen Mr. Allen driving up Broadway with Andrew Jackson and Mr. Hone disapproved of General Jackson, his friends and followers (Vol. I p. 104)

(E) The Journal of Commerce -

The day after Mr. Allen's death, The Journal of Commerce had this to say about him.

"Death of Stephen Allen. - The death of the Hon. Stephen Allen is one of the most mournful incidents connected with the loss of the Steamer Henry Clay. He was formerly Mayor of this city, and had filled many other important public stations, always with credit to himself and benefit to the community. He was truly one of nature's noblemen -- generous,

patriotic, upright, honorable, true. As a small specimen of his liberality, we may say that several thousand dollars of his money have passed through our hands within the last two years, to aid in the emancipation and colonization of colored people. In every instance the gift was unsolicited, except by a statement of the case through our columns. Yet he did not respond to all the appeals made. The question with him evidently was, how can I give my money where it will be most useful. Mr. Allen had lived to a good old age, and filled up a life of eminent usefulness and honor. His death will be universally and deeply lamented."

(F) C.C. Leigh as reported in the Brooklyn Citizen of the 7th September, 1888, at a meeting of the Society of Old Brooklynites said

"When De Witt Clinton was Governor of the State of New York, the managers of the House of Refuge were his intimate friends. In his message to the Legislature he said; "the best penitentiary institution which has ever been established by the beneficence of man, is in all probability the House of Refuge in the City of New York, for the reformation of juvenile delinquents. I cannot recommend its further encouragement in language too emphatic." Mr. Leigh continued: "I desire to call to your remembrance here Stephen Allen, who was one of the founders of this society. He was a successful merchant, was elected Mayor of the City of New York, and a member of the Legislature at a time when it was an honor to be elected to such positions. He was interested in all improvements of the day. His special efforts were directed through this society to the reformation of the criminal and imperiled children. He was president of that society, always prompt and vigorous in its executive business for twenty-eight years until his lamented death in 1852. .It is one of the traditions of the Board that he always called its members to order on the exact minute of an appointed meeting. If a quorum were not present, he would adjourn the meeting and although he met the slightly tardy members upon the stairs, he never returned upon his steps. The result was that the meetings of the Board were attended with promptness, and the business was considered in regular order and

finished with the closeness becoming a legislative body. He was one of the victims of the frightful catastrophe which occurred upon the Hudson, the burning of the steamer Henry Clay."

Those who wish to see a portrait of Mr. Allen when Mayor of New York will find one by Waldo and Jewett in the City Hall in the Borough of Manhattan. His likeness, when well along in years, is to be seen at the New York Historical Society, hung at present on the north wall of the north room, ground floor. The Society also possesses various letters and reports in Mr. Allen's own hand, though nothing relating to the text, which follows.

Mr. Allen was buried in New York City Marble Cemetery on Second Street, east of Second Avenue. His monument stands just to the west of the entrance.



Stephen Allen

(November, 1825)

You no doubt recollect our conversation the last time we met. The topic was, the events of our early life, the difficulties we had encountered when first setting out in the world and the success we had met with under all the circumstances, in that there was great satisfaction to be derived from the moderate and successful procurement of wealth, and that a competence was within the reach of everyman who would use the means for obtaining it; which simply consist in the due exercise of economy, industry and such a degree of rational intelligence as is the call of every person who will lend their whole mind and thoughts to their business. But the grand question was, will the man be contented and happy who has spent three fourths of his life in unremitted activity, when he retires from business? This is a subject upon which I have thought much, and have entertained many doubts, and these doubts have been strengthened by instances that have come under my own observation of men who have retired after accumulating a competence by active pursuits and, of relief to slide into habits ruinous to their constitutions and disreputable to their characters and connections. These instances which I have observed deterred me from retiring from business some years ago, but as old age was creeping on, and as the necessity for adding to my means, as well as the capacity for active business was diminishing every year, I thought (it) a duty I owed myself, if not to others, to relinquish my share in a concern in which I had so long been engaged. Your reply that the instances that I had alluded to were of men who scarcely possessed any acquired knowledge except such as related to the business in which they had been engaged through life; that reading had never constituted any part of their employment or amusement and that therefore they were incapable of deriving either pleasure or satisfaction from the perusal of the more interesting or finished authors of our language; that their library, if they possessed one, was more for show than use; and that they would consider it oppressive were they

compelled to read the whole of a single volume of Bacon, Locke, or Shakespeare that such persons had rarely attempted to put their ideas or thoughts on paper and perhaps would be incapable of doing it with any degree of correctness upon any subject that required much thought and reflection, as the whole extent of their writing had been confined to the posting of their accounts or the scrawling of a letter upon some subject of mere business. You remarked therefore that it was no wonder if such persons, after having retired a few years from business, should find themselves uncomfortable in their feelings, and harassed by listlessness for the want of their accustomed relief to mind and body.

But you were pleased to say that this was by no means applicable to me, for to your own knowledge I had always been fond of reading, had read a great deal, possessed a decent collection of books and had profited and improved myself by reading them. And moreover that I was capable of communicating my ideas in writing, and as a proof of which, you referred to my Reports, &c. which had appeared in print. To this I could only answer that my reading had been desultory, and had generally been resorted to for amusement; that altho I had read a great deal, I had never been so fortunate at any time (as) to possess a literary friend who could have guided me in my selection of books and that therefore I had read good, bad, and indifferent as they came in my way, and had not profited accordingly, as I might have done under other circumstances; that as to my writing I admitted that I tho't it might be understood and passed by those who are willing to make a liberal allowance for bad grammar and perhaps bad spelling. ---- This, you said, was admitting enough for your purpose, and that whenever I found myself without employment, if I would commence a journal of my recollections of past times, you promised not to act the critic but to read what I wrote with attention, and that you

had no doubt, with pleasure and instruction. You know not what you have promised for whatever you may think of it, I am about holding you literally to your word: and accordingly, actually conceived the idea of writing my memoirs. - -

In my next epistle therefore I shall commence as all biographers do, with some account of my ancestors, parentage, birth &c.

(November, 1825.)

During the reign of James 1st of England, who tho' a Protestant by profession was nevertheless an enemy to the Puritans so called, or Nonconformists to the established Church of England, my ancestors emigrated to Holland, where they were permitted to enjoy their opinions unmolested. About the year 1620 or 1624 some part of these emigrants came to this country, and located in the first instance in the Eastern Colonies, but in course of time removed further south, as I believe to Rhode Island, from where not many years since, I had a visit from the sister of my father, whose husband's name was Green.

The family from which I sprang came to the Colony (now State) of New York and fixed their residence at the Village of Brooklyn on Long Island, where my father was born. My grandfather was born in Holland from English parents and he used the low Dutch language altogether in conversation, as did my grandmother also, except when conversing with persons who did not understand it. My memory of occurrences and events only carries me back to the time when I was five or six years old and thereabouts. When about this age I was much in the company of my grandmother, who was then blind and infirm. I performed many small services for her, and usually led her to the Moravian Church on Sundays, where she was a regular attendant. And in return for these services she

would divert me with tales of my ancestors, and stories derived from her perfect knowledge of Sacred History, such as Joseph and his brethren, the Prodigal Son and the fate of the children who mocked the Profit and were destroyed by wild beasts of the forest, etc. It was from her therefore, that I derived the information respecting my ancestors on my father's side. My mother ---- was born in Germany, and emigrated to the City of New York with her parents when quite a child.

My father was born on the 21st of October, 1737, and my mother on the 17 of February, 1738, and they were married on the 20th of October, 1756. Their issue was five children, all males, of whom I was the youngest. Two of them died a year or two after their birth. My brother John, who was nearly a man grown at the commencement of the Revolutionary War, was one of the drafted militia called into service by the Continental Congress and left the city when it was evacuated by the American army and taken possession of by the British, since which nothing to be depended upon has been heard from him, and it is presumed he fell in battle fighting for the liberties of his country in some of the northern expeditions during the first or second campaign of our army on the Canada frontier. My next older brother, William, was brought up to the sail making business and removed to the island of Antigua about 1787. There he was doing well, but ill health compelled him to make a voyage to the United States, where he was completely restored but on his return again to the island, he was unfortunately lost at sea in a severe gale of wind that occurred a few days after he had left this port.

I was born on the 2nd day of July, 1767, and am now in my fifty ninth year. My father, who was a mechanic by profession, a house carpenter, died while I was a child of not more than two years old. He was esteemed a superior and expert workman and had been selected by the proper department

about 1769 to inspect a number of workmen sent from this city to Pensacola in east Florida to erect extensive barracks for the accommodation of the British troops then in possession of that place, which is now a portion of the United States. Here he took sick with fever, supposed to be yellow fever, and died.

This left my mother a widow with three children, and little or nothing to support them with, except what she gained by her own industry. She did support them however and brought them up reputably, gave them such an education as the times and her circumstances would permit, and left them the inheritance of a good name, and an irreproachable character for piety and virtue that has been of more real value to the writer than would have been, without the impressions left upon his mind from her example, the mines of Mexico and Peru.

(November, 1825)

The information that I communicated in my last letter was principally derived from the verbal accounts of my relatives, who are no more, having descended (sic) to that bourne from whence none return.

I will now proceed to detail such occurrences within my own recollection of the past as I may deem worthy of being communicated. After the death of my father was ascertained to be true, I was boarded by my mother with an uncle named James Giles who had married a sister of my father. The first occurrence that fixed itself upon my memory was the burning of the New York Hospital which took place February, 1775, and when I was about seven years old. This fire was said to have happened through the carelessness of the workmen about the building, who had omitted to extinguish the fires in the chimney place when going to their dinner. The consequence was that - - - - this Charitable Monument of the Benevolent

was totally destroyed except the walls which were constructed of free-stone and impervious to the flames. By a grant of the Colonial Legislature of same year amounting to four thousand pounds sterling (or dollars 17,778) the Society was enabled to commence the rebuilding of this edifice, but the War of the Revolution which occurred about this period prevented its completion until after the peace of 1783.

This uncle of mine, though an Englishman by birth, was a true Whig, a friend to the rights of man and the liberties of America. He took great pleasure in unfolding to my infant mind the principles contended for by the Colonies. This he endeavored to effect in several ways. If any transaction of a public nature, such as a meeting of the citizens on political subjects, &c. (took place) he would take me by the hand and lead me to the scene of action and there endeavor to make me understand the cause and purport of the occurrence.

I recollect that in one of these walks, he took me to the park in front of the City Hall, then called the fields, and showed me the liberty pole erected there and explained the object and intention of it. It appears that a pole had been erected by the Friends of Liberty on the spot where the one we were examining stood, but that some villains of the Royal Party had cut it down during the night, and in order to prevent this in the future the pole then standing had been bound with iron hoops for the height of seven or eight feet from the ground. This pole was about fifty feet in height, at least two feet in diameter at its base and tapering to a diameter of ten inches at the top, on which was suspended a cap of liberty, emblematic of the principles for which the people were even then contending. It was also intended for a rallying point for the Friends of Liberty, in the event of their being attacked by the Mercenary Soldiers of the King.

On another occasion, as the principles of the Revolution became more diffused, I remember there were poles erected around the park, upon which were placed empty tar barrels as beacons of alarm in event of an attack from the British garrison, stationed in the Fort. And at the same time the streets were blockaded with large logs of mahogany piled one upon the other forming a breastwork of seven or eight feet from the ground.

In one of our walks we observed a large concourse of people collected at the lower end of Broadway, in the vicinity of Bowling Green or Parade, as it was then called. The alterations which have been effected in this part of the city will make it necessary to state its situation at the time we are speaking of, in order that my view of the occurrence to be related may be comprehended. The southwest point of the City now called the Battery was originally a pretty high bluff of sand. Upon this bluff our Dutch ancestors, at their taking possession of the country in the name of the States General of Holland, had erected the first works of defense against invasion, which works (were) continued with but little alteration until some years after the close of the Revolutionary War. The greatest height of sand was on the side next the river and on an average was about forty feet above tide water and was supported by a wall of stone at least twenty feet in height. On the top of this were the ramparts or breastworks, mounted with cannon. These ramparts were carried around the whole knoll or hill in the form of a crescent or half moon. On the northeast or sand side, the ground descended with a gentle declivity, and here was the principle and only entrance to the Fort. On the top of this entrance, and immediately over the gateway stood a building of small dimensions intended for an office, either for the use of the Governor or some of the officers of state. Around this building the citizens had fastened a rope, and

just at the moment of our arrival thousands of them were strung up Broadway pulling with all their strength in order to raise the building from its foundation. What particularly caught my childish attention was the breaking of the rope, and the fall to the ground of every person who had hold of it at the same moment. This event of itself was not of much importance, only that it tends to show the determined and daring spirit which actuated the first move in a Revolution that ended so glorious for the country, and also how small matters will fix themselves upon the memory of the young in years, for had it not been for the breaking of the rope, it is probable that the whole transaction would have escaped my memory, as no doubt many greater moments have.

My uncle was a man who had been well educated and was considered in those days a good teacher, having kept school for a numbers of years in this city. He was a subscriber to most of the periodical writings of the time, particularly those which treated of the great question at issue between this country and Great Britain, and he appeared much delighted with the political writings of Thomas Paine. These, especially the paper entitled "The Crisis", he would frequently insist on my reading to him. And although I barely knew how to read at that early age, much less comprehend what I read, I nevertheless received some benefit from the operation, for the explanations with which he would accompany my reading of particular passages, which forcibly struck his own mind, had a tendency to impress them upon mine, and of inspiring me with a feeling of reverence for those engaged in the cause of their country, which has never left me to this day, but has rather increased with the increase of years; and now whenever I meet an old Continental soldier I feel that I owe him a debt of gratitude for the privileges I enjoy, which neither time nor circumstances can efface from my mind.

(November, 1825)

The enthusiasm of the people of this city in favor of liberty, just previous to the commencement of hostilities, was truly admirable, particularly when we look at their situation, and the small means they possessed for defending themselves, together with the power of the government with which they had to contend. Matters however were now fast approaching a crisis, and the British Parliament being roused to a sense of the danger which threatened them, were preparing a force, which in their opinion would overwhelm the colonies at a single blow.

As harbinger of what might be expected, two frigates were dispatched, to wit the Rose and (the) Phoenix, which entered the Port of New York without receiving the least injury from the batteries erected by the citizens, and in passing up the Hudson River discharged several broadsides, damaging a number of buildings in the streets near the water, and frightening the women and children most unmercifully. There were a few stout hearts, however, who paying but little attention to the salute from the ships, drew a field-piece to a commanding position, with which they annoyed His Majesty's liege subjects not a little. Many of the inhabitants took to flight, and my aunt and self among the rest. We retired to a place quite secure from the shot from the ships, being behind some of the hills then standing a little to the south of Canal Street - - - Here you might see a mother with a child on one arm, and a bundle of necessary wearing apparel on the other, with one or two urchins hanging to her skirts. There an old man with a small trunk under his arm, which no doubt contained his treasure, the hard earnings of many years, and

which he valued far above the, to him, imaginary liberties of his country.

Scarce a word was heard from the whole group while the guns were roaring, but no sooner had they ceased than all tongues were going, some lamenting the folly of those who were opposing the Government of the Mother-Country, while others were rejoicing that the danger was over and they were permitted to return to their habitations. This is a true picture of what occurred without any degree of coloring whatever. These indications of hostilities on the part of Great Britain, together with the news that an invading army was on its way to subdue the revolters, gave encouragement to those who held to the Royal Government and who were designated as Tories in contradistinction to those who were friends to American Liberty and who were known by the name of Whigs. The leaders among the Tories were such generally as held office under the Royal Government, together with their connections and dependents. There were others also, men of large estates, who either fearing the loss of their possessions, or not feeling the oppression attempted by the British Parliament individually, cared but little for the honor or independence of their country, or the degradation of their countrymen, so as they could continue to enjoy the Royal favor and their estates in ease and security. This description of persons were pretty generally impressed with a belief also that this country could not contend, with the least prospect of success, with a nation so powerful as Great Britain, and that the Continental army would be crushed at the first onset. Such views and opinions coming from persons of influence had the effect to raise the hopes of the Royalists generally, and produced in them a feeling of arrogance toward the Whigs, which broke out in some instances in acts of oppression revolting to the feelings of humanity.

An instance occurred within my own recollection which though in itself of small importance will tend to show the disposition then manifested by the friends of Royalty towards the Whigs. A Mr. Roorbach, who had been forward in opposing the arbitrary proceedings of the British Parliament towards this country, was met on the Greenwich road (now Greenwich Street) by one of the then wealthy family of the name of Bayard, who at that day was one of those who believed, or affected to believe, in the supremacy of the Parliament of Great Britain. Bayard was on horseback and Roorbach on foot. Bayard at first accosted the other and asked how he dared show his rebel face on the King's highway. Roorbach retorted that he was no rebel, but that he was a free man, and claimed the right of approving or disapproving the measures of Government and particularly of the acts of a government when he was unrepresented, -- that it was an usurpation of power in the British Parliament to pass laws taxing the Colonies, when the maxim of the constitution was that no man should be taxed without his consent, rendered either by himself or by his representatives. To these unanswerable reasons Bayard only replied with abuse unworthy of a gentlemen and eventually by blows inflicted by the butt of a loaded whip, and at the same time by attempting to drive his horse over the unarmed Roorbach, who, in order to escape with sound limbs took shelter behind carts, through alleys and over fences, until he arrived at the home of my uncle in Warren Street, where he was received and protected. He had been here but a few moments however before the arrival of Bayard who swore lustily that unless the fugitive was delivered up he would pull the house about the heads of its inmates. His threats were but little regarded by my uncle and aunt who throughout this glorious conflict with the British were at all times ready to succor and relieve the persecuted Whigs.

He therefore left the premises, and no doubt boasted of his exploit to those of the same fraternity with himself.

These unmerited insults heaped upon the Whigs by the friends of royalty, rather increased the number of opponents to the arbitrary measures of the mother country than diminished them, while the press, that scourge of tyrants, teamed with essays in favor of liberal principles, and endeavored to stimulate the citizens to resistance, at the same time calling upon them and urging them by all the ties of manhood to defend with fortitude their honor, their lives and their homes. A good portion of the citizens were by these means brought to side with their country and it was thought that with the assistance of the Continental troops the city might be saved from invasion and the ravage of the Royal Army which was momentarily expected to arrive. But unfortunately these anticipations were not realized, as will appear hereafter.

(November, 1825)

The opinion which had been entertained that the city might be saved from capture by the British was weakening daily as the danger of an attack approached, and the alarm of the citizens finally became so general that many of them determined upon a removal, and packing up some of the most necessary articles retired to the country, locking up their dwellings, with all their furniture, provisions and other articles of value within them, under the impression that it would only be necessary to be absent a few weeks or at most a few months, when they would be enabled to return. In this the great part of them were sorely disappointed for the British held the place to the end of the war, which lasted nearly eight years, -- and the exiles from their homes who were, at the commencement of the struggle, in easy

circumstances, and some of them wealthy, returned after this long absence to behold the devastation of their property by the ravages of fire and the destructive devastation of a remorseless and savage foe.

I recollect perfectly that, during this alarm among the citizens, I saw my brother John for the last time. He was in the ranks of the drafted militia and was marching down Warren Street, fully equipped for service. The troops made a short halt, nearly in front of the house of my Uncle Giles, and it was proposed to John by my mother that he should tarry and let the troops pass on without him. This he utterly refused, considering it both cowardly and dishonorable to desert the standard of his country at the time of need, and he accordingly proceeded with the others to a station occupied by the American army at Fort Washington, near Kings Bridge and at the extreme end of York Island. After the evacuation of that place by the Americans we had no certain accounts of his destination or fate.

I have before observed that my mother was left a widow with no other means for the support of herself and children but her own exertions. She possessed many friends, however, always ready to advise and assist her. One of these advised her to leave the city during the alarm, - with their family. We accordingly all retired to the house of a farmer in the township of Bushwick, King's County, Long Island.

The Expedition fitted out in England for the subjugation of the Colonies, and which had for some time past been expected by the friends of royalty and the anticipation of which had been the means of driving the inhabitants of this city from their homes, at last arrived and landed on Long Island on the 26th day of August, 1776. On the next day after their landing, an engagement took place with the American troops near Gravesend and New Utrecht, the result of which was the total defeat of the Americans (who were

principally raw and undisciplined militia) the retreat of General Washington to New York and finally the evacuation of the city, which was taken possession of by the British without resistance on the 30th day of August, 1776. After the British troops had effected a landing on Long Island and defeated the American army, they distributed themselves in small parties at such a distance from each other as to enable them to concentrate upon any emergency. In this manner they scoured the country for several miles, making prisoners of all they met under the pretence of their being rebels, insulting the peaceable inhabitants and destroying their property and effects in their passage.

The friend of my mother with whom we resided had a lad in the family as an apprentice about 18 or 19 years of age, whose name was Michael. This lad had taken me with him to the woods for the purpose of gathering wild berries and nuts and while we were thus engaged we were all at once surrounded by a party of British soldiers, one of the squads above mentioned. The officer commanding them on perceiving us immediately called out to his men "here boys is a couple of rebels. Let's hang them up on this tree". Poor Michael shook with tremor, and some of the soldiers observing the fear they had excited in him endeavored to increase it by raising him up as if preparing to put their threat of hanging him in execution, he at the same time begging that his life might be spared, while the soldiers endeavored to invent new modes of diverting themselves with his fears. All this time no attention was paid to me, and I stood gazing at their red coats and finely polished guns and bayonets, feeling no dread of their threats that I can recollect. Perhaps from not knowing what danger was, I felt no fear of it. The soldiers finally appeared to listen to Michael's prayers and consented to accompany us to the place of our residence. Here they were informed that we were all peaceable citizens, and

willing to obey the laws and orders of the Commander-in-Chief. They accordingly took such refreshments as the house afforded and departed.

(November, 1825)

The British now had undisturbed possession of the whole Island of New York, and a great part of Long Island. In this posture of affairs, the family we resided with concluded to remove back to the city, and accordingly the day after the great fire, which occurred on the 15th day of Sept., 1776, we came to New York after an absence of only a few weeks. My second oldest brother William was at this time an apprentice to James Leonard, learning the business of a sail-maker. Mr. Leonard was a decided and undeviating loyalist, of course an opponent of the Whigs and a great admirer of kingly government. He therefore did not remove his family but remained at his house in town, having nothing to fear from the British authorities to whose cause he was a friend. To his house my mother took me, on our arrival at the city. My recollections as to the great contrast between the city when we left it and at the time of our return are perfectly clear. The depredations of an invading army, the great number of uninhabited houses and the destruction of nearly one-third of our principle buildings by the great fire had in a few days rendered the city of New York almost desolate. The cause of this great and alarming fire was never satisfactorily ascertained. It was said to have commenced in the lower part of the city, near the Battery and on the east side of the town, and that, owing to the conduct of the British soldiers, who were all under arms, in preventing the inhabitants from approaching or operating upon the fire, it soon spread in all directions, and became an almost general conflagration. The flakes of burning embers flew to a great distance and communicated the fire to houses in several

different parts of the city. The main fire extended to and crossed Broadway, destroying in its progress the venerable and ancient structure of Trinity Church with several others, together with all the buildings or nearly all between that and St. Paul's Church, where it was fortunately arrested in its progress.

For several days after this tremendous conflagration the city was enveloped in a cloud of smoke scarcely penetrated by the rays of the sun. I recollect having gone in company with my brother William to see the ruins of the fire, and that so dense was the atmosphere with the smoke we were compelled to cover our faces with silk handkerchiefs in order that we might be enabled to breathe this disagreeable air. Several persons had lost their lives during the fire by the brutality of the soldiers, who paid no respect to age or character but thrust their bayonets into all who dared to disobey their orders. Among others who had been murdered was a citizen by the name of Wright White, a respectable inhabitant and a man of family. It was alleged by the soldiers that he was caught in the act of cutting the handles from the fire buckets, in order to prevent those engaged from extinguishing the flames. But on the other hand it was urged and no doubt truly that the handles of the buckets were broken off on the one side, and consequently that more than half the water they contained was wasted in passing these broken buckets through the ranks, and that to prevent this waste of water by this use of the broken vessels, he cut that part of the handle which still adhered to the bucket. This being observed by one of the soldiers, he immediately drew his bayonet and stabbed the man to the heart, without either warning, inquiry or explanation. No punishment was inflicted upon the author of this brutal act, nor was any inquiry instituted as to the cause of this man's death. The city was then under military government, and those of the citizens who

had remained at home, however they may have felt or acted when the place was in possession of the Americans, deemed it now the most prudent course to keep their peace. The Tories however justified the act in order to show their loyal attachment to the King and his army, as well (as) to intimidate the few remaining friends to their country still in the city. They brought the dead body of the murdered White to the neighborhood of his family and hung it by the heels at a sign post, where it continued a spectacle of horror to those in the vicinity and a warning to the multitude that such would be their fate, if they attempted to murmur or complain of the treatment they were receiving from the invaders. The body was left hanging for several days and until putrefaction had commenced, when it was removed by an order from the Commander-in-Chief.

The destruction of private property by this fire was immense, for it was not only the buildings which were burned but many of them contained all the furniture, clothing and other valuables belonging to those who had fled to the country just previous to the taking of the city by the British. The Whigs have always contended that this destructive conflagration was the work of the Tories who held possession of the city till the British entered, and that their malicious hatred to the rebels induced them to set fire to the houses of those who had fled from the city and sought an asylum in the country, rather than continue under the Royal Government, and the insults and contumely heaped by its Tory adherents. On the other hand, the Tories affected to believe that the fire was the work of the rebels who rather than see the city in the possession of the friends of royalty, had determined to lay it in ruins, and thus render (it) uninhabitable to the British or those of their friends who remained in it.

(November, 1825)

[A short time after their return to the city, S.A. was placed by his mother in a school kept by a man named Belcher. Later he was placed in another school in the lower part of the city, kept by one Wingfield. S.A. complains that Blecher favored his class rival, and that Wingfield was partial in his treatment of the children of the rich, and also inflicted unnecessary physical punishment. The boy seems to have worked hard, but to have been quick to resent what he regarded as unjust treatment, taking the law in his own hands at least once, and "soundly beating" a boy who had injured him, after which he never returned to the Wingfield establishment.]

(November, 1825)

The war of the Revolution was now at its height and on the part of the British it was conducted with much cruelty and oppression toward our countrymen. I before observed that my Uncle and Aunt Giles were warm and decided friends to the cause of their country and that they embraced every opportunity that occurred to relieve the distress of those who during the contest were made prisoners by the English and confined within the bounds of the city. I have frequently accompanied my aunt and assisted her in conveying to the prisoners messes of soup, prepared for the purpose of distribution among them. The gratitude expressed and no doubt felt by those poor fellows, is beyond the power of language to describe. It was no uncommon thing with them to be left for several days together without food, and the small pittance allowed them was of the worst sort, such as was unfit for the use of their own (the English) soldiers or sailors. This seasonable supply therefore of a good bowl of

soup was a great luxury to them and not only relieved the cravings of hunger, but no doubt was the means of saving many of their lives, for the unwholesomeness of the food they were compelled to eat, the want of good air by ventilation, and the filthy situation of their prison was the cause of the death of thousands.

The places selected for confining American prisoners were the buildings used as sugar-houses (some of which are still (1825) standing) being large structures, three or four stories high, badly ventilated and worse lighted. These houses were generally built in confined and narrow streets, and sufficiently secure to prevent escapes. I have frequently passed during the Revolutionary War the sugar-house now standing in Liberty Street, -- (since torn down and stores built on the ground 1840), -- near the Middle-Dutch Church, and heard the poor fellows calling from the grated windows to the persons who were passing in the street below and entreating them for relief, declaring that they were starving; but they were soon silenced by the guard, and whatever may have been the disposition of those whom they addressed to grant them relief, it was impossible to carry it into effect without the license of the commanding officer which was not easily obtained, for from appearances an impartial observer would conclude that one of the objects of the British was to exterminate every person found in arms against them, not only in the field by fair and open combat, but by the cruel and cowardly process of starvation and disease. The stench from the filthy condition of these places of confinement was the cause of complaint being made by some of the most respectable inhabitants attached to the royal cause, to the Commander-in-Chief, and provision was finally made for the removal of the sick to other places selected for their reception. The Friends Meeting House in Pearl Street (since torn down and a new one erected in Rose

Street) the Brick Church corner of Beekman Street and the Park, and a large wooden building, then standing at the corner of Warren Street and Broadway, were designated as hospitals for the sick. - - - -

So fatal were the disorders (illnesses) with which these unfortunate individuals were attacked that fifty or sixty died daily. Their bodies were removed by cartloads every morning and thrown in the trenches of the works raised for the defense of the city by the Americans, previous to its evacuation, and there buried in order to save the trouble of digging graves. I have seen for several mornings in succession eight or ten dead bodies laying in the yard of the Friends Meeting House, waiting for the cart to convey them to their last home.

In this unadorned relation of facts I confine myself chiefly, and nearly altogether, to occurrences which came under my own observation and which have impressed themselves upon my memory in a manner never to be forgotten. The barbarian cruelty of the British toward the American prisoners, whom they uniformly termed rebels, is without a parallel. The thousands who were sacrificed in their prisons in this city and in their floating dungeon the "New Jersey" (a prison ship moored at the "Wallabout" near the present Navy Yard, Long Island) will be a standing reproach upon that nation to the end of time. They were not satisfied with wreaking their vengeance upon the millions of human beings that fell within their power by the fortunes of war, but they extended their depredations also to the numerous edifices erected by those termed Dissenters for the worship of the Deity. Thus the Middle-Dutch Church was stripped of its pews, gallery, &c. and turned into a riding school for the cavalry. The North-Dutch Church was appropriated as a barrack for the Hessian soldiers. The Baptist Meeting House was turned into a storehouse. The Brick Meeting House and

that of the Friends, as before noted, were used as hospitals, and several other places of worship were appropriated to uses full as ignoble as those mentioned. The inside work of all those edifices was torn to pieces and used as firewood by the soldiers, and every indignity which the savage mind of our invaders could invent, or the most hellish disposition could inspire, was put in operation to gratify their malignant hatred to everything American.

(November, 1825)

I have already informed you that my brother William was an apprentice to James Leonard, a decided friend to the Royal cause. The business he followed depended entirely upon the operations of commerce, and was therefore by the course of events considerably injured, but his well known attachment to the British Government had procured for him many friends and full employment for making the sails for privateers fitted out by the Tories to war against their own countrymen, and the bread bags for the Commissary Department for which there was an extensive demand. I was in the habit of frequently visiting my brother at the sail loft and finally became much attached to the business of sail making and at the age of twelve years, after repeated requests, my mother consented to permit me to learn the trade. I accordingly commenced in the same loft and under the same master as my brother. ----

(December. 1825)

For some cause or other Mr. Leonard did not appear to think it necessary to have any of his apprentices bound by indenture. This may have arisen from the situation of the country, - the city being under a military and not a civil government, - and besides any one having influence with the men in power (which was the case with Mr. Leonard) could at

all times enforce obedience by confinement or impressments for the men-of-war, at pleasure. There did not appear any disposition in the boys to leave the place, and for myself I can truly avow that such a thought never entered my mind; and had he continued in the city until I became of age I should have worked every day I was bound to work by the simple verbal agreement of my mother, which was that I should serve from the day I entered until I was twenty-one years of age.

The usage we received was by no means such as it should have been, as we were neither well clothed, well fed, nor well lodged. There were but three of us apprentices at that time, my brother, a lad named Joseph and myself. We all lodged in the garret of the house occupied by the family, each of us having his hammock and a pair of blankets, which served as bed and covering. Mr. Leonard's circumstances were moderate, but the business he was engaged in for the government turning out profitable, he soon became comparatively easy in his finances and accordingly purchased a house in Beekman Street, rather more genteel and commodious than the one he then occupied. On his removal to his new establishment it was concluded by the family that there was no room for the boys, and they were therefore sent to the sail-loft to lodge. Our meals were taken at the house regularly, without much variation as to diet. Our breakfast and dinner were eaten in the cellar (basement?) story of the house, which was partly underground and our supper was served up to us in the yard or in the street, as it suited us. For breakfast we uniformly had cocoa with bread, - for dinner a stew composed of potatoes, onions and coarse beef, and in order to save trouble to the servants a large pot of this mess was cooked at one time and what we did not eat at one meal was served up at the next. So that I have known a single cooking last for a week, which by continued warming up became bitter, being burnt over the fire and sour from age

and fermentation. No complaints were made however, at least none within the hearing of the family, except by looks and gestures and they were little minded or attended to by any one.

For our supper we uniformly had dealt out to us two slices each of the round of baker's bread with butter, which was usually dealt out to us in the yard of the dwelling, and if it rained or snowed we retired to an open shed, intended as a roasting place for the fowls, and after receiving our allowance we marched in regular order to the sail-loft eating our bread and butter as we went through the streets. Here we passed an hour or two in idle conversation or in other pastime by no means profitable until the time arrived for retiring to rest.

(December, 1825)

As the war of the Revolution progressed, the business of our sail-loft increased and there was much more sail-making to be done than formerly. This induced Mr. Leonard to take more apprentices and our number now amounted to five in all. ----

One of the arbitrary methods pursued by the British in manning their ships of war while at this port, was by impressment. This was affected by sending out an officer of inferior grade such as Midshipman, with a number of sailors, who took in custody every man or boy they met, who had the least appearance of being either a sailor either in looks or dress. This was a great annoyance to the citizens, particularly the poorer classes who were thus dragged from their families on Board a man-of-war and, unless they had some friend of influence to apply for their release, they were compelled, perhaps for years, to be parted from their

friends and families and serve as a common sailor on Board these British dungeons.

The boys in our loft had frequently to encounter these English press gangs that were prowling about the city, both day and night. The dress we wore, composed of canvas trousers and short jacket, exposed us continually to molestation, and it several times happened that we were taken up and kept in confinement during the night, until Mr. Leonard came forward to claim us in the morning. I recollect one instance when I was chased by one of these gangs, and followed by one of the sailors composing it into the bedroom of my mother, and he did not relinquish his pursuit until he saw, if he took one, he must take both of us.

This occurrence took place after the marriage of my mother with Philip Sykes and when I lodged at their house. I was about this time in my fourteenth year, and these outrages upon our liberty had a strong tendency to increase my predilections in favor of the cause in which my country was engaged. They had in fact increased with my years and the same principles and feelings were imbibed by my brother William. We were denounced therefore by the other boys as rebels. Nevertheless we adhered to our principles, and always expressed a degree of sorrow whenever an American vessel was brought into port as a prize with the thirteen stripes triumphantly displaced under the Cross of Old England.

At such times we had to bear the scoffs and jeers of those who held to the royal cause, but when news arrived of the capture or defeat of any of the British forces we retaliated by exulting in our turn, and we made no secret of our feelings on such occasions.

(December, 1825)

During my residence with Mr. Leonard I became an expert waterman and could manage a boat, either with sail or oar, with considerable dexterity. He was passionately fond of water excursions himself, particularly of fishing with hook and line, for which purpose he always kept a sail boat in readiness and made it the duty of the boys to see that she was well secured and kept in proper order. Whenever he went on these excursions he would usually take one of the boys with him for the purpose of casting and raising the anchor of the boat, preparing the boat for fishing, and other matters. When the fishing was dull he would sail and course it up and down the river. Sometimes he would proceed up the East River to Harlaem through Harlaem River to Kings Bridge and, by striking the masts of the boat, proceed under the bridge through Spuyten Duyvil Creek to the Hudson River, - thus making a circuit of the whole island of New York. This was however effected previous to the erection of the large grist mills, now standing over the stream at the Kings Bridge, so called. - - - -

There were several journeymen in our shop who were permitted to lodge there as well as ourselves. The men would at times make up a party with the boys for an excursion by water. But this was generally on Sunday or some holiday as we were never permitted except at such times to leave our work unless it were to accompany Mr. Leonard and his party, as has already been remarked. Upon one of these occasions we had made up a party to proceed to Coney Island near Sandy Hook, for the purpose of shooting water-fowl and getting beach plums for which this sandy island was then a famous rendezvous. In order that we might enjoy ourselves the boys had saved up the money they had earned by their work for some

weeks previous and had now expended it for stores of provisions and powder and shot.

We started on a Saturday night in the month of October and proceeded slowly with the tide in our favor down the bay, intending to arrive about daylight at our place of destination. But when we had got in the Narrows, opposite what was called Cortelyou's Point, we were all at once astounded by the call of a Hessian sentinel from the shore, who in High Dutch, as it afterwards appeared, directed us to keep off, - but none of us understanding the language, we took the contrary course and made for the land. The sentinel observing our intention to land concluded we were an armed force belonging to the rebel whale boats, and accordingly left his post, proceeding as fast as his legs would carry him to the guard house and crying out in High Dutch as he went the rebels are coming. This brought out the whole guard consisting of about thirty men with their officers, who after some confusion among them, marched down to where we had landed, with fixed bayonets. Not knowing what was to happen to us we continued in our boat, which we had run on the beach awaiting the result. On the arrival of the soldiers they called and beckoned us on shore and after placing us in their centre, marched us to the barracks. Here they directed us to sit down on the ground and now for the first time it appeared the men were directed to load their pieces and to shoot us in the head, if we offered to escape. At the same time the sergeant who commanded them proceeded to consult his superior officer in order to know what was to be done with us. Had our boat been a rebel whale boat as the sentinel believed, every soul of this guard might have been surprised and captured, for it plainly appeared not one of them was prepared for defense, as their guns were not loaded when we landed, and the confusion and alarm they were thrown in showed that an enemy of any kind was an unexpected visitor.

It was fortunate for us, however, that they were unprepared, as it is more than probable that had it been otherwise some of us would have been sent to our long home for daring to approach the shore when we had been so peremptorily ordered off.

On the return of the sergeant, he directed some of his men to search our boat, who reported in High Dutch that we had guns on Board with powder and shot, but no bullets. We were then taken to a fort at a small distance, and kept in the open air all night, seated on the carriages of the guns with a sentinel in our front, who regaled us with Dutch airs in a voice perfectly harmonious and musical. We were detained until the sun was more than an hour up, when we were taken to the house occupied by the commanding officer as his quarters, and who had just risen from his bed in order to examine us. Previous to our arrival at this officer's quarters we had fixed upon one of number, a journeyman in our loft to stand as spokesman for the party, who had agreed to explain who we were and the object of our visit. This man at times would stammer in his speech, but he always prided himself upon being the best scholar in the loft, and could name several books that he had read from beginning to end, among them several old novels and plays, pieces from which he would spout out in the characters of Richard, Hamlet and Romeo, much to our astonishment and amusement. The commanding officer being a German could not understand the English language, but to appearance spoke the French with much fluency, as there was a gentleman with him, on the porch of the house before which we were paraded, conversing with him in French when we arrived. There were five of us in the party, and after we were properly arranged with our spokesman in front, the gentleman I have alluded to inquired in English where we were from, to which it was answered that we came from New York and he gave the answer to the officer in

French. The next question was, where we were going with the boat. To this our spokesman commenced an answer, but the fit of stammering came upon him to such a degree that he could only get out with "Sir, we was go - go - go - go -" which caused a hearty laugh among our examiners. The poor man became so much abashed (as) to be compelled to stand mute, and it became necessary that some one of our party should step in and relieve him. My brother William therefore, who was the oldest boy among us, came forward and informed the gentlemen that we were all apprentices, except the person who had spoken first, and that we were going on a small party of pleasure to Coney Island in order to pass the day in gunning and gathering beach plums.

This was rehearsed in French to the officer of the guard, who appeared perfectly satisfied with the truth of our story. He was next informed who we lived with, the trade we followed and the object we had in view in going on our jaunt by night. Our story was credited and we were told to go about our business, and the sergeant of the guard was directed to return us what had been taken from the boat. On returning to the boat, we found all our small stores destroyed, the soldiers having eaten and drunk everything we had provided for our subsistence through the day. We nevertheless felt happy that we were again free, and accordingly proceeded toward home hungry and weary, not having broken our fast nor closed our eyes since we had left the city.

(May, 1826)

My education was very limited, having left school before I was twelve years old. I could read and write

indifferently, and had learned a few of the rules in arithmetic, but possessed no knowledge of grammar and was wretchedly difficient (sic) in my spelling. I was nevertheless very fond of reading, and would readily part with any of my possessions in order to obtain a book. My brother William was also a great reader, and had much better opportunities for obtaining books than I had, owing to the privilege he possessed of doing overwork, and the other perquisites of the sail-loft, which enabled him to purchase, while I had not the means to follow his example. So valuable did he deem his property of this description, and so fearful was he that it might be injured by my use, that he rarely permitted me to read any of the books composing his library, which were carefully deposited and locked up in his chest. I had of my own property however, nearly all the school books that I had formerly used, consisting of a Testament, Dilworth's Spelling Book, Dilworth's School Masters Assistant and a number of small story-books, which had been presented to me while a child, or which I had purchased with my holiday money; and I continued to add to my stock whenever my means would admit such second hand books as fell in my way and I was enabled to purchase cheap. My reading therefore was desultory, such as old plays, novels, songs, poetry and history, and not infrequently, books of a pernicious tendency. This fondness for books has never left me to the present moment and it is to this reading that I owe the little erudition I possess, and at the same time the ability of conveying my thoughts to others in a plain garb by the means of writing. I have often thought, if I possessed a friend who was capable and willing to select for my perusal during my minority such books as would have conveyed useful information only, that the benefits of my reading would have shown itself to a far greater extent than it now does.

When I was about fourteen years old my mother was married to Philip Sykes, he a widower and she a widow of fourteen (twelve?) years standing. She had frequently represented to Mr. Leonard the impropriety of compelling us to sleep in the sail-loft and the evil effects that would eventually result from the practice, and remonstrated more particularly against the utter neglect of the Sabbath exhibited by us. Now that she had a home of her own she insisted that we should be permitted to come to her house every Saturday evening, in order that we might attend church on Sunday. Neither my brother nor myself had been bound by indenture to Mr. Leonard, and the profit that he derived from our labor was of some importance to him; but so utterly neglected had we been, that with the clothes that we possessed, and they were of no worse description than had always been allowed us, we were unfit to appear at church or in decent company. The boys of our loft were usually fitted out at a slop shop and permitted to receive annually a roundabout jacket of coarse cloth, trousers of the same description and a waistcoat. Over this they wore their canvass trousers during the winter, and in summer the woolen trousers were thrown by. They were allowed a clean check shirt once a week, and during the winter a pair of woolen stockings. Their hats and neck handkerchiefs were generally bought by themselves, and their shoes they obtained by frequent solicitations from (to) their master, but seldom before they were literally barefoot.

The remonstrance's of my mother, and perhaps the fear that we might leave his employ, induced Mr. Leonard to alter his conduct toward us entirely. We were now directed to go to a tailor and get measured for a suit of clothes. I was permitted to go to my mother's to sleep at night, while a small room was prepared at the house of Mr. Leonard for the accommodation of my brother. The next Sunday after this

revolution in our affairs we appeared in a new suit of decent clothes, being the first we had received during our apprenticeship, and the last we did receive as after-events will show. - - - - From this time forward until the close of the Revolutionary War, when we were left to shift for ourselves, we were treated both by Mr. Leonard and his wife with much more kindness and attention than formerly, and I trust that we requited this usage by a faithful discharge of our duty as apprentices.

(May, 1826)

The disposition which (had) led me to conciliate (sic) my school fellows in our tasks or studies operated upon me in a much stronger degree while learning my trade or calling, and I endeavored therefore to excel my fellow apprentices, and did excel many of them both in the knowledge of my business and expertness in its execution. This was observed by Mr. Leonard and he would frequently tell his brothers (two of whom followed the same businesses) how much work I had turned off in a day. They in turn, when complaining to their boys about the small quantity of work performed, would proclaim me as an example to them, and thus the enmity of these lads was excited to my prejudice, when I had in no way intended or thought of offending them - - - -

I was frequently designated by Mr. Leonard to assist him in cutting out sails, and by strict attention and turning the thing constantly in my mind, I laid hold of the art without any special instruction. The thing in itself is very simple when once understood, but it is a rare occurrence that boys are able to see it without frequent explanations, and it is therefore the last business taught an apprentice. I had reason to presume that Mr. Leonard saw I had some knowledge of the method he pursued in working his rules, for without

inquiring whether I understood the operation or not, he one day just as he was about commencing the work of a rule for cutting a sail he was called off and handing me the measure desired me to cut it out. I accordingly went to work and did cut it out before his return, with the performance of which, after examining it, he was satisfied.

My brother, who a short time before this occurrence, had completed his apprenticeship and was then working in the loft as a journeyman, was a good deal surprised at my performance, as he had no idea that I possessed a knowledge which had cost him a good deal of time and thought to understand. These are trivial matters, scarce worth recording, only that they tend to show my progress toward independence, a subject always uppermost in my thoughts and one which I determined to achieve if possible, - which determination was one of the principal stimulants to my after exertions.

(June, 1826)

The success of the American Army under General Washington and the capture of the British under Cornwallis had effected a great change in the opinions of the loyalists, and they now began seriously to doubt the success of the royal cause. Frequent conferences were held between the Leonards, who were all staunch loyalists, as to their destination in the event of peace. James Leonard, with whom I resided, was much the most violent of the brothers, and had several times declared in my presence to which he added an oath, that he never would consent to live under the rebel government, and in this he kept his word as will be shown hereafter.

News finally arrived that negotiations for a peace between Great Britain and the United States had commenced at

the City of Paris, in France. This was dreadful news for the loyalists in this city, and their countenances and expressions on the occasion betrayed the bitter and malignant passions working within them. But to the Whigs, many of whom had been compelled through poverty to continue to the city during the whole contest, it was glorious and consoling news, and in such measure as they dared they exulted in the prospect of peace, independence and a free government, the choice of a free people. For my part I knew little or nothing of the difference between a monarchy and a republic as governments, but the barbarous cruelties I had witnessed on the part of the English, inflicted on the American prisoners and others by the friends and abettors of royalty, led me to detest the very name of King George the Third and those who adhered to his cause and sanctioned his measures. I therefore felt as much gratified as any that we were to be freed from the sight of the disgusting red-coats in our streets, as the British soldiers were then termed by the Americans.

Accounts at last reached us that the preliminaries of peace were signed by the ministers of the several parties engaged in the war, and that on the ratification of the treaty all hostility was to cease. The Tories expressed and reiterated dissatisfaction at the event, and abused the British Ministry for dastardly cowardice, and as causing all the misfortune which befell the British forces in this country and the rain of those who had faithfully adhered to them and the cause throughout the contest. In order to allay these clamors the Tories were told that the fatherly protection of the King would be extended to them, and those who had lost their property either by capture or confiscation would receive a suitable remuneration from the British governor, in presenting well authenticated evidence of their losses. - - -

The turbulence and passion of some of these friends of royalty, particularly those who intended to leave the city, was the cause of many dastardly acts, enough to disgrace them in the opinion of every sober person, be his political opinion what it might. Corroborative accounts having been received that peace was actually concluded, although the exchange of ratifications had not been effected, and that hostilities had ceased, the people from the country returned to enter the city before it was evacuated by the British; but instead of a peaceable reception such as they had a right to expect, they were assaulted and otherwise ill-treated by the Tory rebels, while others of a better sort though equally hostile, stood by and either did not care or did not dare to interfere. An occurrence of the nature alluded to came under my own observation and was as follows. A boat arrived from some place in Connecticut and came to the wharf immediately opposite where our sail-loft was then located. She had on Board a small cargo of cheese, onions and other matter for sale. Shortly after touching the dock the men on Board were accosted by some of the Tory gang who stood by and who demanded where they were from. On being answered that they were from Connecticut, these fellows immediately commenced abusing the men by calling them a parcel of rebel rascals, and every other opprobrious name they were enabled to invent. This soon raised a mob of idlers and vagabonds and the poor men were beaten with hoop poles, first being lashed to the posts on the wharf, and otherwise ill-treated. Their small cargo was destroyed, their boat turned adrift, and they (were) ordered to return home and not show their faces while a British subject continued in the city.

These brutal acts only tended to inflame the feelings of the Whigs against all who had adhered to the cause of Great Britain, and it required much management of the civil

authorities and great forbearance from the sober citizens to prevent retaliation on those of the royal party who intended to stay, where they were permitted; and there were many of them who, being non-combattable (sic) and in a measure neutral, that had gathered a decent property during the contest and who had not found it to be their true policy and interest to be silent and to keep in the background, under an expectation that their insincerity would be forgotten if not forgiven them. The Leonards were among those who had made up their minds to leave the city, and preparatory thereto James Leonard made a voyage to Nova Scotia in order to ascertain the situation of the country and the prospects of business and trade in the event of a removal. On this occasion I was left in the care of his business, my brother William having obtained work in another sail-loft, and on his return he spoke in flattering terms of the attention I had paid to his interest during his absence. The day fixed for the evacuation of the city by the British was the 25th of November, 1783, and only a month or two of the time was unexpired, the preparations of those who were to depart caused a good deal of bustle and anxiety.

I continued to attend the sail-loft altho' there was very little business to be attended to, and of course took my meals regularly at the house of Mr. Leonard. Here I was frequently importuned by a sister of Mrs. Leonard, who resided in the family, to proceed with them to Nova Scotia, but I constantly refused, avowing as a reason that I would by no means leave my mother, and further that I was and always had been in principle a Whig and felt glad at the change about to be effected. The time finally arrived for the departure of the family and about the middle of October, 1783, they all set sail for their new abode where the greater part of them, after experiencing many hardships and privations laid their bones.

(June, 1826)

The American troops with General Washington at their head entered this city on the 25th November, 1783, and at the same time the British departed from it. This was a happy day for the real friends of America and it was celebrated accordingly by old and young, particularly by those who had left the city and the commencement of the troubles and had now returned for the first time from an exile of eight long years - - - -. I, though not an exile, partook of the general feeling of hilarity and followed the American troops with Washington at their head to his quarters in Broad Street, where he addressed the citizens in his usual style of elegance. A few of the old Whigs, who remembered the treatment they had received from the Tories during the contest, diverted themselves by going through the city and pulling down their signs, particularly those bearing the ensign of England placed in the front of taverns and public houses. One man however who had kept a rendezvous for sailors, preserved his sign by a display of ingenuity which did him credit, even in the opinion of the mob. The American frigate Belisarius had been captured by the British and adopted under the same name as one of their navy. The sign alluded to was a representation of this ship with the British colors flying from each mast-head. When the party arrived at this house, the word was given to pull down this obnoxious emblem, but one of the Yankee Jack tars at the moment that the order was about being carried into effect cried out "Avast there, don't you see this is no English flag, but the thirteen stripes?" and sure enough the Ensign, Jack and Pennant, were none other than the American and the ship instead of a British frigate bearing the cross of Old England, proved to be an American frigate bearing the Stripes

and Stars of the United States. This change had been effected by an ingenious device of the owner, who was one of those who cared little who ruled if he was safe, and accordingly the night previous to the evacuation he unhung his sign, and with the assistance of a Knight of (the) Brush, erased the British colors and substituted the American and then replaced the sign as before. He was greeted with three cheers and left to enjoy the fruits of his ingenuity.

There was no person attached to the British interests who appeared so awkwardly situated as the keeper of the Provost, as it was called. The old debtor's prison, since remodeled and turned into public offices still standing in the park, was at that time called the Provost and the keeper the Provost Marshall. At the hand of this establishment was placed a man named Cunningham, an inveterate enemy of the Americans, who made it a point to treat those who came within his power as prisoners with the most unrelenting cruelty. Eight or ten hundred feet in the rear of this building was an open field called the Negro's Burying Ground, and in this field was erected a gallows on which public malefactors were executed; and it was generally believed (for myself I have no doubt of the fact) that many Americans in the custody of this man met their fate in the still hours of the night on this gallows. This much is certain that it frequently happened to the dead hour of the midnight, when all was still as the grave, this fellow would take from the room where six or eight Americans were confined, one or two of the number, who never after were seen or heard of.

There can be but little doubt therefore that either to gratify the fear or hate of his superiors, or to satiate his own blood-thirsty disposition, hundreds of our countrymen were sacrificed in the way alluded to. No person having been appointed to take charge of the prison, where there were both debtors and felons confined, until the arrival of General

Washington, this man kept possession by order of his superior, and was only relieved from his charge on the day the American troops entered. On his delivering the keys to his successor, he proceeded to the wharf, where a boat was in readiness to convey him to the ship then in the bay, and in which he was to sail to England. He was met however, on his way to the dock, by a number of women, mostly the wives of those who had returned from exile, and ordered to face about, as they were determined to hang him on the gallows he had erected for the execution of their countrymen, and had it not been for the interference of some of the more considerate citizens, and finally Washington himself, the threats of those patriotic females would have been literally carried into effect, and the world delivered from the further inhumanity of a monster. He was however relieved from the fate which awaited him and suffered to depart, carrying with him the execrations of the whole community.

I was now about fifteen years old, and was turned loose upon the world to seek my fortune, with nothing to commence but a good constitution, and a scanty wardrobe. My brother William had concluded to occupy the sail-loft of Robert and David Leonard, and to enter into partnership with a young man named Augustus Wright, who had served his time with them; and he proposed to me, as the best thing I could do under present circumstances, to work with them until I was enabled to better my situation. To this I assented upon their paying my Board and allowing me small perquisites. Thus I continued more than a year, and until they were compelled for want of business to give up the loft and work as journeymen. My brother, however, could not brook the idea of descending from the position of master sail-maker to that of journeyman, in the place of his nativity. He therefore packed up his all, after disposing of a part of his books to pay the expense of a passage, and forthwith proceeded to

Philadelphia, the greatest commercial place in the Union, where he obtained steady and regular employment in the line of his business.

It was not many days after this occurrence before I also found employment in one of the sail-lofts in this city, but it was with some difficulty that my employers were enabled to continue me at work on account of the numerous threats of the journeymen, who went so far as to insist on my discharge, declaring it was the height of impropriety to employ a boy upon the same footing as themselves who were men and had served a full apprenticeship to the business, while I was far from being of age and had only worked there a few years at farthest. My experience at the work however, and the diligence with which I dispatched the business, over-came all the objections of these journeymen in the minds of those who had employed me, and as work was by no means abundant in those times and the hands to perform sufficiently plenty the grumblers found it (to) their interest to be silent and I accordingly continued to labor in this loft until there was none to perform or rather until the work to be done was only such as could be completed by the apprentices. - - - -

(June, 1826)

My grandfather and grandmother on my mother's side were from Germany, and had settled shortly after their arrival in this country on a farm they had purchased in the town of Kinderhook, Columbia County, State of New York. They were now very old and infirm and therefore solicited my mother and her husband to remove from the city and reside with them on the farm. This invitation was accepted and shortly after I had commenced working for myself - - - - they removed to the country. In a little time after this period, say 1786, I was invited by a Mr. Eights (?) of

Albany, who carried on the business of sail making there, to come and work for him with the promise of steady employment for several months. This offer appearing to me preferable to the uncertainty of employment here, I accepted it and proceeded to Albany where I spent the summer and fall of that year, about seven months. The city of Albany at the period I am speaking of say 40 years ago, (1786) was very limited in extent to what it now is. The streets were in the worst condition imaginable, but few of them paved and consequently in wet weather the walking was intolerable. The language of the inhabitants was Low Dutch, - scarce a word of English was spoken except to those who could not understand Dutch. Their manners to strangers were forbidding, unsocial and reserved, and there appeared to be no will to cultivate an acquaintance. - - - - In the fall of the year I received from Eight the whole of my arrears for the time I had been in his employ, not having occasion for money before, for although I had brought but little with me I experienced no inconvenience for the most of it, as everything necessary was provided for by accommodation by the family and I had early formed a resolution that I would not spend what I earned uselessly and with extravagance. I was now quite wealthy, comparatively speaking, having in my possession more than one hundred dollars in hard cash and, as I thought, pretty well provided for the coming winter.

On returning to the city, I stopped at Kinderhook and paid a short visit to my mother, who appeared to be comfortably situated. She complained, however, that she missed her church and the society she had been accustomed to while in the city, - for although the neighborhood was respectable and in some instances wealthy, they were not of the same religious persuasion or turn of mind with those (with whom) she was so long associated as members of the Moravian Church in this city. On my arrival in the city I

found business very dull and it continued so through the winter and spring, so that my store of money, from my inability to add to it, was almost exhausted by the expense of board and clothing while out of employ. I did not despair however of still being able to live and in order to lessen expenses I left my Boarding house and took lodging in one of the sail-lofts, where I occasionally worked.

This was the darkest and most discouraging period of my life, for there was so little mercantile business carried on that sail-making was almost at a stand-still, and it was with much difficulty that a single days work could be obtained. I had my full share of employ, small as it was, as I used due diligence in looking for it, and enjoined upon myself the duty when out of work of visiting every sail-loft in the city daily, and would frequently by this means obtain half a days work in one, and sometimes two or three days work in another, so I have often worked, during the period alluded to, in three or four different lofts in a week; and what added to the embarrassment of the times was the poverty of the employers, for after I performed the labor there were but two or three of the master sail-makers who had the ability to pay. And it often happened that I had as much labor to perform in collecting my small earnings, as I had in earning them.

The next year business was much better, and I obtained a situation in a sail-loft belonging to Thomas Hillson. - - - There were then a number of the Friends who owned shipping, and Hillson being the only one in the city at that period connected with the society, and who carried on the business of sail-making, he obtained the whole of their work, and consequently was enabled to keep two or three hands constantly employed. He therefore engaged Augustus Wright and myself by the year, at low wages, and Boarded us at his house, but we were compelled to lodge in the sail-loft. This

Hillson was one of those eccentric characters who are occasionally met with in the world. His dress was of the most slovenly kind, with elbows through his coat. His other garments filthy and with slouched hat, he appeared more like a beggar, than a man in the decent walks of life. - - When in the company of the Friends, he was all meekness and suavity, and could use the plain language of that sect with fluency, but at other times he was the height of vulgarity and would swear like a pirate. He was at times careless and prodigal of his money, and at others penurious to a fault. In his temper he was whimsical and passionate, and was often tyrannical to those under his control wherever he had an opportunity of showing out (it?) with impunity, but to those who possessed independence enough to resist him, he was docile and meek. - - - -

With all this impropriety of conduct and oddity of character, Hillson possessed one good trait, for at the time I am speaking of he provided well for his family and laid by sufficient money to build him a very decent house in this city. We continued to work as journeymen in this loft until the year 1787, when Hillson concluded to take a partner in his business and finally proposed the matter to and offered me the situation - - - - On the 1st day of May, 1788, we commenced our partnership under the firm of Hillson and Allen. About the same period Augustus Wright who for so many years had been my shop-mate, received a similar offer of partnership from a sail-maker of the name of Cone, which he accepted also, and they commenced business on the same date that we did.

(August, 1826)

- - - - In the fall of 1787 our citizens celebrated the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. The

display made on this occasion exhibited much pomp and parade and was conducted with a decorum and order not exceeded by anything which has appeared in this country either before or since the event celebrated. All the various classes of our citizens were in procession, each in separate associations, - the merchants, professional men and mechanics, all designated by some peculiar badge, purporting the class to which they belonged. The sail-makers erected a large stage which was drawn on trucks by four horses, upon which a number of workmen (were) busily employed and who during the procession completed the sails of a ship of 250 tons. Other mechanical branches also had their stages and workmen employed, all tastefully arranged with painted banners, mottoes, &c. - - -

The adoption of the new Constitution, as it was called, was opposed by some of our most respectable citizens. The reasons assigned for this opposition were the local advantages possessed by this state over others in a commercial point of view, - that our true interest was to continue independent and instead of sending our large revenue to the United States Treasury, that we ought to use it for our own advantage and improvement. These reasons had their influence with many, but for myself the measure of a federal government had my decided approbation, because it appeared to me that in the event of war or internal commotion under the old confederacy we should be disjointed and divided, but that in union we should be strong and able to meet any shock which might occur, and what we lost in revenue would be fully made up to us by the extension of our commerce and business concerns.

For some time previous to the period alluded to I had been acquainted with a young woman, the daughter of Widow Marschalk, at whose house I spent many of my leisure evenings. A union between us had been agreed upon and we were only waiting for some favorable circumstances to occur in

order to consummate our mutual wishes. The most important was the arrangement I had entered into with Hillson to commence business as a master workman, which would enable me, as I believed, to provide for a family with decency. No sooner was our partnership agreed upon, therefore, than I proposed our marriage forthwith, and being assented to by the parties, it was effected on the 17th day of May, 1788, when I was not quite 21 years of age and my wife not quite 17! I was now commencing a new era in life and not only felt the necessity but turned my whole attention to the object of increasing my ability to provide for a family, and my exertions did not go unrewarded as the sequel will show.

[This boy who married before he was twenty-one, had eight children by his first wife, nine by his second wife, and none by his third wife, whom he married when he was seventy-two years of age. Perhaps, like Lord Clive, he was astonished at his own moderation.]

(April, 1827)

- - - - I commenced the world as a man of family, as I before observed, in May, 1788. My means were small indeed, inasmuch as my whole fortune consisted of my wardrobe which was pretty scantily supplied, and ten pounds currency, equal to twenty-five dollars, which I had by great economy in my expenditures saved from my earnings as a journeyman in order to pay the expenses of our wedding and to commence housekeeping. We took rooms for the first year in a house at the upper end of Pearl Street, belonging to a Mr. Arden, who occupied a part of the same building, with his family. - - - The principal furniture of our rooms belonged to Mrs. Marschalk, my wife's mother. The articles were the relics of better times, for this old lady had in former years lived in something like style and was in pretty easy circumstances,

but at the commencement of the Revolution her husband and family having left the city on the British army entering it, and continuing in the country during the whole period of the war, the property they carried with them was all expended for their support and they returned to the city on the conclusion of the peace in a much worse condition as to pecuniary matters than when they left it, for what they had left behind (consisting of two fine houses) with the most valuable of their effects, was consumed by the great fire which happened shortly after the invading army had taken possession of the place.

I now attended to the business of my sail-loft with redoubled assiduity and industry while my partner Hillson spent a large portion of his time in walking the docks, as he said in pursuit of business. My acquaintance with the customers of our establishment was very limited, particularly at the commencement of our partnership and during the first and second year of its continuance, inasmuch as they were principally such as had employed Hillson previous to our connection, and the collecting of the money with other outdoor business, being mostly performed by him, it was seldom that an opportunity offered for me to become acquainted with them, and I had therefore no choice but to be contented with matters as they were conducted, which threw upon me all the labor of the establishment, together with the keeping of the books and accounts. Remonstrances had no other effect than to irritate and promote altercation, and I found that instead of amendment matters grew worse. - - - - Finding that no change in his conduct was likely to be effected, I told him that I would dissolve our partnership, be the consequences what they might. To this threat he paid no attention whatever and I therefore stated to the person of whom we rented the sail-loft, the situation of our concern, and my reasons for the determination I had formed of

dissolving my connection with Hillson, and then left it at his option, either to continue with me as his tenant or to rent the place to Hillson. He preferred that I should continue in the loft, which was of some importance, as we generally did as much work for the landlord as would pay the rent. I accordingly informed Hillson of the arrangement, and at the same time tendered him a part of the loft for any work he might have, until he could provide himself with another. This partnership therefore, which had existed for nearly four years was finally dissolved on the first day of December, 1791, and I commenced business on my own account.

My prospects were not very flattering, for a large portion of our customers to the shipping business were the particular friends of Hillson, drawn to him by his Quaker connections and those among the boatmen and coasters who were also attached to him on account of his constant association with them on all occasions. He had acquired also a great name with the Long Island people for cutting a handsome sail, many of whom were our employers. With a full view of all these advantages on his side and disadvantages on my own, I did not suffer myself to despair of being enabled by industry and strict attention to business to make a living, for I had long before this come to the determination of using the utmost economy in all my concerns, in order to keep myself from obligations of every sort, and to lay by something in case of misfortune, or accident to myself or family. With a view of accumulating some property therefore, I purchased a small house in Chestnut Street, while still in company with Hillson, although my purchase money was then far beyond my means, being twelve hundred and fifty dollars, when I possessed only fifty dollars, and a part of this sum I had to borrow of Mrs. Marschalk in order to make the first payment. My motive in making the purchase was to avoid the May Day removals (three of which, as Poor Richard has told us, are as

bad as a fire) and I concluded also that the owing of this debt would prove a stimulus to our economy until it was discharged. My agreement with the person of whom I had purchased was that he should receive any sum that I might wish to pay, not less than fifty dollars, and accordingly no sooner was I in possession of that or a larger amount which could be spared with convenience, than I proceeded to have it endorsed on the bond, thus lessening the debt and preventing the accumulation of interest.

[Tall oaks from little acorns grow.

Mr. Allen disposed of a large amount of real estate under his will, "Conveyance of Record, City and County of New York," published 1856, shows that in the course of his life he took title to 61 parcels of property in the City of New York, and divested himself of 36 parcels.]

The first year I was in business after the dissolution of copartnership with Hillson, my profits were quite small and did not pay expenses. I made the most of the work, however, which came to me by working early and late, so long as there was anything to be done, and hiring as few journeymen as possible and I prided myself upon being able to say that no person who employed me was ever disappointed, for the work was always done at the time promised. - - - -

(April, 1827)

It has been the uniform custom of those following the business of sail-making to obtain the materials such as sail duck, bolt-rope, twine, thimbles, marlin and lines, from the ship chandlers, giving them the retail profit on those articles which it had always appeared to me belonged to the manufacturers of the sails; and I had determined whenever my means would permit to furnish these articles myself. I

commenced therefore, about this time to purchase a portion of the articles alluded to from the importer, in such quantities as my means would admit, and prudence appeared to warrant, and charged them in my bills at the prices fixed upon them by the ship chandlers. - - - -

My second purchase of real estate was a house (lot) in Oak Street, upon which I shortly after commenced the building of a more roomy and convenient house, than the one I then occupied. My means would not permit me to completely finish this before occupying it, and I only finished therefore as many of the rooms as were necessary for the family, always keeping in mind the maxim I had set out with, not to be in debt if possible to avoid it. - - - -

The purchase of this lot in Oak Street had been well considered, but it was no part of my plan to build a house upon it at the time I did, as my means at that time did not warrant the measure. I was persuaded to it by a crafty carpenter who owned the adjoining lot and was about commencing, as he averred, the building of a house upon it, and he gave me many plausible reasons why I should make a great saving by running up my building with his. This was sufficiently plain, provided I had been dealing with an honest man, but I found my experience in the business progressed that I was not only paying this fellow an advance upon the price of all the materials purchased, but that all the choice timber and other articles were selected and put in his building, while the refuse was turned over to me. On making this discovery I soon determined to break all connection with this faithless man, and so soon as the house was enclosed I called for a settlement and dissolved the concern. In order that I might save all the expense possible in this construction, I performed myself whenever leisure would permit such parts of the work as I was capable of; the whole of the painting, for instance, both inside and out, was

done by me at leisure times and by this means I was able to put the building in a condition to be tenanted, without running in debt or embarrassing myself in my other and more important concerns. - - - -

It was on the first day of May, 1795, that we removed to our new dwelling and in the latter part of the summer of that year the city of New York was visited for the first time with that scourge of our sea-port towns, the yellow fever. In order to avoid the contagion, I removed my family to Long Island to a small tenement on the Jamaica Road about one mile from Brooklyn Ferry, which I had with some difficulty procured for the purpose. This occurrence proved to be a considerable injury to my finances, as I was of course compelled to abandon my business as well as my home but I did not suffer the time to be spent in idleness, for in the same room that we slept, cooked and ate, I rigged up my working apparatus, and made sacking bottoms, which were afterwards disposed of to the cabinet makers. In the November following, and on the appearance of black frost, the fever ceased its ravages and we removed to the city and recommenced our customary avocations.

In order that I might ascertain whether I was gaining anything by my business, and how much, I had adopted the practice, (and which ought to be followed by all who wish and expect to gain a fortune) of annually examining my affairs by taking an inventory of stock on hand and debts due, as also the debts I owed, by which means I was able to see how I had thrived for the year. Thus I found that on the 1st of January, 1796, after having been in business about eight years, I was worth at least four thousand dollars more than when I commenced. I now determined to commence the purchase of small lots of sail duck, for which purpose I attended sales at auction where I frequently made advantageous cost purchases that netted me a large profit. I also purchased

small lots at private sale when opportunity offered but only from those who had sufficient confidence in my integrity and punctuality in payment, and who were willing to sell without receiving a note at hand for the amount, for so fearful was I that a demand might be made for the payment on a day when through some unforeseen disappointment I might not be able to meet it, that I preferred the loss of profit on a purchase to the loss of my credit. - - - -

The revolution in France which commenced in 1793 (sic) and the belligerent state of all Europe had called into action the whole commercial resources of our country, and every kind of business flourished, but particularly the business I was following. And, as I had started with the determination of gaining by honorable means a competent support for myself and family, whenever business was given me to do I exerted every nerve to perform it by the time required, in order that no disappointments might be experienced by my employers, and that at the same time, by quick dispatch my profits might be augmented. Year after year, during the fall and winter months, which was always the most busy season, have I labored at least fourteen hours out of the twenty-four. My practice was, in order to save time, to take breakfast before daylight and with a lantern containing a light, proceed to the sail-loft with the apprentices, there kindle our fire, and commence our work, perhaps an hour before the journeymen would arrive (as they worked only by the day) which in winter was 7 o'clock. - - - - And at night we worked by candle light till 9 o'clock, and sometimes later, according as we were pressed for time, to complete the business engaged to be done; but I never worked on a Sunday, preferring the most unremitted and hardest labor though the week to the violation of the Sabbath.

(May, 1827)

- - - - The revolution in France, which overturned the government in that country, was now at its height. - - - At the commencement of this struggle the French people, and (for) some years afterwards the American people, seemed to be fired with enthusiasm in favor of the cause they were engaged in; but as the Revolution progressed parties arose, some in opposition to the violence of the revolutionists and others advocating their every act. The British Government had now declared war against the French people, evidently with a view of establishing a monarchical government over them, founded on the same principles as that which the people had just overthrown. This occurrence led to a complete division among the American people, and there arose the two great parties as well known by the designation of Federalists and Republicans.

I was not long deciding which of these parties to join, for on the one hand I beheld all the old Royalists and Tories whom I had known while yet a boy attaching themselves to the Federalists, while on the other many of the old Whigs who had ever been friends of the revolution were joining the Republicans, and from this view and my early predilections in favor of the freedom and independence of my country, altho I was but a novice in politics, I was induced to join the Republican party, and have ever since adhered to it, through good and bad report, believing it to be founded on fundamental and immutable principles. But although I was warmly attached to the principles, and by my vote and counsel endeavored to promote the success of the party I had espoused, I did not permit my politics to interfere with my business or to draw me off from giving it the most strict and regular attention. My political opinions I always considered as an immutable and sacred right which I determined to enjoy at all events, and I always meted to others, in this respect, what I claimed for myself, never attempting to control or

improperly influence any man in my employ, and never inquired of him his opinion either in politics or religion; but the same indulgence was not extended to me by others, for some of the Federal merchants who employed me were eternally harping on my politics in order that they might find some excuse for the withdrawal of their patronage. I never denied however the party to which I was attached, but always contended, whenever the subject was forced upon me, that politics had nothing to do with trade, and that I always considered due and strict attention to business and the interest of my employers as paramount to every other consideration, except the peaceable and independent enjoyment of my opinions, for which no man had a right, nor would I permit him on any occasion, to call this right in question. I lost some customers whose aristocratic feelings would not permit others to enjoy the same feelings (rights?) which they claimed for themselves, but such illiberal persecution only tended to confirm me the stronger in the sentiments I had espoused, and this system of coercing the minds of men, which appeared to have been adopted as a party measure by the Federalists, together with other high-handed proceedings all having the same end in view, was eventually the cause of destroying their ascendancy in the government of the country and of bringing into power the friends of equal rights and Republican rule.

The commerce of the United States consequent upon the general state of war in Europe had greatly increased. Being the only nation then at peace, (it) became the principal carrier for the other nations of the world. This naturally brought into demand everything connected with commerce and the business I was engaged in increased with this demand. I did not permit these favorable opportunities to pass without profiting by them, and therefore rather increased than diminished my exertions whilst business was brisk, by which

means I was enabled to place my financial affairs in a situation that always gave me the command of the market for any article I wished to purchase equal to the most wealthy of my compeers.

There has always been much respect attached to the business of sail-making, and the persons who followed it were generally a respectable class of citizens. They were less numerous than at present, but at no time so numerous as those engaged in other mechanical branches, and I think I may say without vanity that there were more men of sound mind and good sense among them in proportion to their number than were to be found in any other particular calling. Many of them had filled public places, such as members of the Legislature, members of Congress, High Sheriff of the county and several other high and trustworthy offices. They were, except in a few instances, on very friendly terms with each other, and in order to a more frequent intercourse, mixed with other considerations, the propriety of forming themselves into a society for mutual support and relief was suggested. This idea was favorably received and in the year (blank in the text) a society was organized and I was appointed one of its secretaries. I afterwards filled the respective offices of Secretary, Treasurer and President, having been promoted by the members from one office to the other in due course.

There was another society in this city, and which is now in existence, under the title of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York, established solely for charitable purposes. Of this society I became a member in the year 1792, and am still a member although more than 37 years have passed since. In this society also I was promoted by the partiality of its members, at one time to the Vice Presidency, and afterwards to the Presidency, an honor confined only to a few of my associates.

On the 17th July, 1802, I had the misfortune to lose my first wife, by a protracted illness of many months, and I was left with a family of seven children to educate and rear. It was now eleven years since I dissolved the partnership with Hillson and I found no reason to regret the step I had taken or to complain of my success in business, as I found my means fully adequate to my wants in a business point of view. In purchasing goods I was much connected with Augustus Wright and Joseph Lathrop, two enterprising men engaged in the same business as myself. Mr. Wright had built a house in Water Street, now standing at the corner of Beekman and Water Streets and he occupied a part of it as a sail duck store, but at the same time continued his business of sail-making. We had frequently conversed on the propriety of such an establishment and the example having been set by him, I soon made up my mind to follow it. I accordingly purchased the house No. 211 Water Street, in the neighborhood of his establishment, and converted the lower floor into a store, but my sail-loft being at some distance, and still considering this as my main-stay, not being willing to give up a bird in the hand for two in the bush, I concluded to take a partner, and accordingly made the proposition to Joseph Lathrop, which he cordially accepted. - - - - This partnership was commenced on the 10th of November, 1802, under the firm (name) of S. Allen and J. Lathrop, and it proved advantageous to both of us, but in consequence of the ill health of Mr. Lathrop, principally, I dissolved the partnership on the 1st January, 1809, and the time that we were connected therefore was six years and a few months. The profits of this concern, exclusive of our sail-making, which was disconnected with the selling of sail, duck, amounted to thirty-two thousand dollars, or sixteen thousand dollars each. - - - -

(May, 1827)

After settling the concern between Mr. Lathrop and myself I commenced business on my own account and on a more extended scale than formerly. In 1810, however, I was solicited by Augustus Wright to enter into partnership with him. To this proposition I assented, it having been made without solicitation on my part, and coming as it did from a man possessing respectability of character, solidity of capital and a good run of business, I had every reason to believe that it would be advantageous to both of us. We accordingly entered into full co-partnership on the 1st day of January, 1810. I say full partnership, because Lathrop and myself were not full partners, the sail-making being carried on by each of us on our own account. But with Mr. Wright the co-partnership was to embrace the whole of our concerns. Mr. Wright had been elected for that year a member of the Legislature of this state, which required him to be absent from the city the whole winter and the management of the business consequently fell upon me. The capital brought to operate in the firm of Wright and Allen was much larger in account than either of us separately wielded and our business was accordingly much more extended and required all of our time and attention to conduct it advantageously. No mercantile house in this city was in better credit than ours and we generally made our purchases upon better terms than others were able to do, who were in the same line with ourselves. We closed the first year of our connection with a handsome addition to our capital.

- - - - The cares of my family increased upon me as the children advanced in years and, perceiving the inconvenience of having two or three young females growing up to womanhood, with no other guide than an old woman who acted as my housekeeper, I was brought to the conclusion that it was

proper for me to marry again. I accordingly cast about for the purpose and finally married a daughter of Joseph Roake, then and now residing in Yorktown, in the county of Westchester. This second marriage occurred on the 15th day of November, 1807, and I have no reason to repent the union. - -

Early in the year 1810, I was selected on a committee from the Mechanics Society to apply to the Legislature for a charter of a bank under the designation of the "Mechanics Bank of the City of New York". - - - - In selecting the directors to be named in the bill, I used all my influence to have Mr. Wright named as one of them, but when the bill came before the Legislature, he positively refused to serve, alleging as a reason for such refusal that as a member of one branch of the Legislature, which was to pass upon the act of incorporation, he could not advocate a measure in which he appeared so directly interested, by having his name in the bill. His name was accordingly dropped, and at the request of some friends my name was substituted. This measure was adopted however without my knowledge or solicitation, and although it was an honor at that time sought after by many, I should never have been consented to receive the appointment, had it not been pressed upon me by those whose motives I had every reason to respect. - - - - The petition for this bank was supported by the whole mechanic interest of this city, and appeared as reasonable, to the Legislature that the charter was granted with little or no opposition. - - - -

(July, 1827.)

On the 18th June, 1812, The United States declared war against Great Britain. The people and government of the country had for a long time borne the most aggravated insults from the British who, by capturing our property on the high seas and condemning it while we were at peace with them,

impressing our seamen and forcing them into their service against their inclination or will, insulting our flag on all occasions with impunity, and heaping upon us abuses of the most opprobrious character, had brought down upon them the execration and hatred of a large majority of the American people. The policy of our government however was peace, at least so long as it could be maintained with honor, but the time had now arrived when it became a duty to resist, and the nation accordingly prepared for war. Now it was that every citizen was called upon to exert his energies in defense of his country, and when he who refused the assistance within his power must bear the odium of disaffection to the cause of liberty and independence.

These considerations, however, had little weight with the Federal party in this country, and this opposition to the war and the administration of Mr. Madison was carried to a most fearful extent. They endeavored to induce the people, and succeeded with many, to withhold any aid to government by the way of loan, under the idea that the Union would be dissolved, and the eastern states cut off from the western; and in order that the idea might have greater weight, they called a convention at Hartford, Connecticut, which was attended by delegates from all the Federal states to deliberate on the subject of a dissolution!! Indeed no means were left untried to weaken the bands of government and force them into a dishonorable peace with the enemy. The effect however was very different from what the leaders of the Federal party had anticipated, for instead of dividing it tended to unite and strengthen the friends of government; and the elections which took place during that period pretty generally resulted in the choice of those friendly to the Republican administration of the country, both for representatives to Congress and our state Legislature.

Individually I felt much interested, but because I was sensible from experience that the privileges we enjoyed here were of the highest order and therefore worth contending for, and because I felt a strong conviction of the justice of the cause we were engaged in. I accordingly exerted all the influence and means that I possessed to bring the war to an honorable conclusion. At the commencement of the contest, I enrolled myself in one of the voluntary companies, composed of persons exempted from the performance of military duty, and regularly met with them for improvement in discipline and tactics. I worked on the works for the defense of the city, which it was deemed necessary to raise on Long Island and other places and I loaned the government all the money I was in any way enabled to spare from my business. The state to which the country was brought by the operation of the war, had naturally tended to injure the trade I was engaged in, and in 1814, my partner, Mr. Wright, concluded to retire from the business, and live on what he had already earned rather than risk its loss while matters continued so unsettled as they were. Our partner-ship was accordingly dissolved on the first day of May, 1814. At the close of this concern I found I had added to my capital about twenty-eight thousand dollars, this sum being my share of the profits earned by the firm in four years and four months, and being the time we were connected. - - - -

The conclusion of this war, altho' anxiously desired, if it could be brought to a close with honor, was nevertheless unexpected to the great body of the people. The event to me was very fortunate, both in a pecuniary point of view and as a general partaker of the blessings resulting to all from a state of peace. During the latter years of the war, the government found much difficulty in filling the subscriptions to the loans authorized by Congress. Several expedients were resorted to for the purpose of raising money,

one of which was the issue of a large amount of Treasury Notes, bearing an interest of five percent per annum, and with these notes the creditors of government were paid in lieu of cash. The money loaned to the government at this period was at the rate of eighty dollars in cash for securities of one hundred dollars, payable at the end of twelve years, with interest at six percent per annum, payable quarter-yearly. The Treasury Notes were at one time as low as fifteen percent below par, or at eight-five dollars in money for one hundred in notes.

In 1814 preparations for a vigorous prosecution of the war were more extensive than at any time previous, particularly on our northern frontier. Several larger vessels of war were ordered to be built at Sacketts-Harbor, on Lake Ontario, and some of a smaller description on Lake Erie. The quantity of sail-cloth required for these vessels was very great, amounting to several thousand pieces, and the difficulty of procuring the article under the then state of credit possessed by the government, was increased by the scarcity of the article in the market.

I was consulted by the Navy Agent on the subject of supplying the sail-cloth necessary for the outfits of the vessels then building on the lakes, but as the goods in my store at the time were insufficient to supply the order, and as the parting with the whole of them would have left me destitute of the means of supplying the calls of my regular customers, I declined selling, unless the article was unattainable elsewhere. I proposed to the agent therefore, that he should authorize me to purchase on the credit of the government such quantities as could be bought of the holders of small parcels, not to exceed the number of pieces wanted. To this he assented and I was accordingly authorized to purchase on a credit of ninety days, payable in Treasury Notes at the market price of the notes on the day the money

should become payable; but, so low was the credit of the government at this period that but few of the holders of the commodity would sell at any price, and those who consented to sell added eight or ten percent to the fair price of the article before they would part with their goods on the terms proposed.

I reported to the agent, accordingly, that there was no prospect of purchasing on anything like fair and equitable terms in this market, - - - and that whatever I had, which might be required for this important object, he might take on the same terms he had authorized me to offer to others. He accordingly engaged the whole of my stock of sail-duck, and requested that it might be prepared with all convenient speed for transportation to the lakes. The goods were packed up as directed, and placed on sleds, provided for the purpose of transportation to the place of destination. When they had proceeded about half the distance, the news of peace was received in this city. This put a new face on matters here, and I soon had reason to felicitate myself on the fortunate sale to the government, and the confidence in their ability, while the Treasury Notes I had agreed to receive in payment arose in value. When the 90 days had expired I received the pay of my bill, according to agreement, the notes at that time being ten percent below par, but not having immediate occasion for the money I laid them by until they arose to par, and I not only received ten percent more than the amount of my bill, but a handsome profit on the goods sold which, had it not been for the perfect confidence I felt in the ability and solvency of the government, would not have been realized.

(November, 1827)

From May 1814, to May 1816, I conducted the business on my own account and although the period was unfavorable to trade, still by strict attention to business and by taking advantage of circumstances in making my purchases, together with the profits of the sale made to the government, I made out to clear and add to my capital more than twenty thousand dollars. In May, 1816, I took into partnership my son, Cornelius M. Allen allowing him one-third of the profits of the firms. This partnership continued until May, 1823, when James A. Reynolds, formerly a clerk in our store, married one of my daughters and I deemed it convenient to permit him also to become a partner in the house. The profits of the business while connected with my son were not so great as formerly, which was in part owing to the limited attention I was enabled to devote to the concern on account of my public engagements and partly to a division of the business, more persons having engaged in it than formerly. I however added to my capital about thirty-seven thousand dollars during the seven years which this firm existed. It will be seen therefore, that during the twenty-one years from 1802 to 1823 in which I conducted the business there had been earned in clear profit about one hundred thousand dollars. This, though slow, was sure, and was owing more to economy in saving, with intense industry and attention, than to any fortunate circumstances (always excepting the sale to government) or to speculation. I will only add, let those who come after me go and do as well as I have done. - - -

(December, 1827)

Having given in detail many of the circumstances of my private life, I will proceed to state the principal of my

public career. - - - - I was elected a member of the Common Council of this city in April, 1812, and took my seat at the Board on the 12th day of May in the same year. In selecting the standing committees for the time, Mr. Radcliff the then Mayor appointed me on that of Finance. The first subject which drew my attention, and which had been referred to the Finance Committee, was the annual report of the Comptroller.

The usual method of stating the annual cash account by the Comptroller was so ambiguous that it was impossible it should be understood by any but himself or those of the Common Council who were perfectly familiar with the subject.

- - - - For instance, one of the items of the account of May 12th, 1812, was stated thus, "To cash paid for Hamilton Square lots \$5345.27" and another "To cash paid for Collect Ground \$1,613.77". - - - - Hamilton Square was laid out by the corporation on the common land, about five miles from the city, and the lots were sold to individuals as eligible building sites but in 1812, at the request of the Common Council, the Legislature passed an Act, appointing commissioners to lay out the whole of New York Island with regular streets, avenues and squares; to effect which, they were compelled to disarrange the whole plan of Hamilton Square by running the lines of the streets and avenues obliquely through the lots. The purchasers therefore claimed from the Corporation remuneration for the injury they were likely to sustain by the plan of the commissioners; and as the act in both cases, first in laying the square, and then in breaking it up, was produced by the agents of the public, it was concluded that the original purchase money with interest should be returned to the owners, and that the property should revert to the city. - - - - The ground covered by the water of a large pond called the Collect was the property of the city; and the filling of said pond with earth was the act of the public authorities, and the expense

of such filling was paid from the City Treasury and afterwards discharged by the sale of lots made out of the said pond. - - - - My influence was exerted therefore, first to have the several items in the annual account as expressed that any citizen might understand them, and, second, to lessen the amount of the contingent account by opening new heads for every expenditure, the amount of which was such as to warrant it, and to carry several of the other items to the accounts already opened for similar objects. - - - -

(December, 1827.)

Previous to my election as a member of the Common Council, I had frequent cause of complaint for the want of information on the public affairs of the city, in which as a tax paying citizen, I felt I was interested, and I therefore made it a point of duty during my continuance in office to afford all the information in my power to the public, in order that they might judge of the measures adopted and act toward their projectors as they deserved. - - - - In the Comptroller's report of May, 1817, alluded to already, I observed a credit of \$11.12 for jury fines. This led me to examine the law on that subject, by which it appeared that the Justices of the Ward Courts and the Judges of the Marine Courts were bound to pay to the City Treasurer for the use of the poor, all monies received by them for fines incurred by the non-attendance of jurors. The sum above mentioned was all that had been received from those sources by the Treasurer and that had been paid in by the Justice of the Fourth Ward. There was every reason to believe that many fines had from time to time been incurred by delinquent jurors since the passage of the Act of 1813, and that the cause of non-payment proceeded from a want of information on

the part of the justices rather than from design. I therefore, at the request of the Committee, offered a resolution at the Board instructing the Comptroller to inquire by note of the several justices why payment had not been made. The resolution was adopted and the inquiry made and in answer the whole of the courts, amounting at that time to twelve, declared that they had at no time collected any money as jury fines. If this was the truth, it is difficult to conceive how they were enabled to obtain a jury under a system so lax and inefficient. - - - -

A few months experience convinced the committee that the finances of the city were in a state of embarrassment, and that a considerable retrenchment in the public expenditure was necessary, or that the taxes must be increased much above the ordinary amount asked for. It may perhaps be considered invidious to attempt an explanation of the cause of embarrassment in the finances of the city, but it becomes a duty to say that its cause may in a great measure be attributed first to the strong party feelings of our citizens, which have frequently induced them to elect men to manage their concerns, not because they were the most capable or intelligent, but because they were partisans. - -

I ascertained from the documents in the comptroller's office that it would require nearly half a million dollars over and above the ordinary revenue of the city to discharge the contracts entered into and to pay the unliquidated debt of the Common Council of 1814 and 1815. In order to meet the heavy calls upon the Treasury, we were compelled to sell off a considerable portion of real estate belonging to the city, in fact every inch of ground belonging to the corporation was put under the hammer, and the proceeds applied (except 25% appropriated to the sinking fund) to the payment of the current expenses of the city. - - - - I frequently reminded

the Common Council, while in session, of the paucity of their means, and the necessity there was for retrenching in their expenditures, but there appeared no disposition to examine the subject, either by the officers or members of the Board, and the burthen of providing the ways and means was put upon the Finance Committee, for which purpose they were from time to time authorized to borrow such sums as the exigency of the case might require. At the period I am speaking of, the annual taxes for the city purposes were \$180,000. - at least \$100,000 less than the annual expenditure, and it was the opinion of some members of the Common Council, and in fact some members of the Finance Committee, that the same amount of taxes would be sufficient for the ensuing year. In order, therefore, to test the correctness of this opinion by an official statement, I offered on the 27th of October, 1817, the following resolutions.

Resolved, that the Comptroller prepare and lay before this Board, a statement of the revenue of the Corporation for the year, from the 12th of May next to the May ensuing (derived from the several items usually calculated on), together with the probable amount of disbursements for the same period, - the estimate to be founded on a comparative view of the receipts and expenditures of the last preceding years; also his opinion as to the best means of providing for any deficiency in the revenue, should any appear, to meet the disbursements.

On the 2nd of March, 1818, the Comptroller made a long report on the subject of the foregoing resolution. He proposed that the taxes be continued at \$180,000, the same as they then stood. His estimate for the expenditure for the year was \$439,650, and the receipts were stated, including the tax of \$180,000, at \$261,800, leaving a balance of \$157,850 to be provided for. His plan for raising this deficiency was to increase the rents on docks and slips,

tavern licenses and hackney coaches, and the sale of ground owned by the Corporation, made out of the Collect, lots at Bloomingdale, at the foot of Dey Street, and at the Albany Basin.

The only available items proposed by the Comptroller was the increase of the rents of the docks, slips and the sale of the lots or the Collect ground. For the land at Bloomingdale we owed more to the creditors of Wm. A. Hardenbrook, who had conveyed the land to the Corporation, than it would bring. The lots at the foot of Dey Street were not yet made, and required several thousand loads of earth to complete the filling, and even when they would be in a state to be sold, we were in debt nearly the whole amount they would sell for to Mr. Varick, the original owner of the water rights, and to the bank of whom (which) we had borrowed money to pay the contractor for filling them. The other property was nearly in the same situation; and the increase of tavern and hack licenses could not be effected without an act of the Legislature, and this would have been attended with insurmountable difficulties, even had a reasonable advance in the price been asked for. - - - It was required that instead of the then revenue for tavern licenses, amounting to about \$8000 we were to draw from that source \$28,000, an advance of 250 percent, and instead of \$500 from the hacks to raise \$3000, which would be an advance from \$5 to \$30 for each license. - - - I suggested to the Committee the propriety of asking for a tax of \$250,000 instead of \$180,000, and demonstrated to them by proof undeniable that even with this larger tax they would be compelled to borrow nearly \$100,000 in order to meet the demands upon the Treasury for the year.

(January, 1828.)

The next object of any importance which claimed my attention was the leases sustained by the city in consequence of the failure of the sureties taken by the Mayor on the bonds of alien passengers arriving at this port, and which sureties were bound to save (the) city harmless from the expense, should any alien become chargeable at any time during two years after his landing. This was a matter of considerable importance, as the expense incurred by the city for the maintenance of these aliens was annually increasing, and the numbers emigrating, in consequence of the distressed situation of their own country, was far greater than at any previous period. - - - - I therefore offered a resolution at the next meeting of the Board, authorizing the Mayor to leave it optional with the captain or owner of any vessel bringing alien passengers, to pay five dollars a head for such passenger or to give bonds the usual way. - - - - The average receipts from 1816 to 1823 inclusive amounted on an average to more than \$3000 per annum.

My immediate constituents were the inhabitants of the 10th Ward, and as their representative it was my duty to look well to their interest. - - - - A subject of this nature occurred in selecting a site for the Centre Market in Grand Street. The representatives of the 5th and 6th Wards made use of every means in their power to have this market placed on the low ground of the Collect, now Centre Street, but by unusual exertions on my part, by inducing such of the members of the Board as felt an interest in the question, and who had not committed themselves, to view the different sites proposed, I obtained a vote in favor of the report I had made on the subject, which recommended the purchase of the gore of land, and the building of a market where it now stands, fronting on Grand, Orange and Rynder (now Centre) Streets.

The convenience of the market to the upper parts of the city and the benefit generally to property must be seen

by all who may view its location. This improvement it is true is in the 9th not in the 10th ward. It nevertheless is an accommodation to a part of the 10th; and if it were not so I should still consider it due to the other parts of the city that the accommodation should be given them, and that was sufficient indicant to advocate it, for at the time I am speaking of but a vary. All proportion of the public money had been expended to improve one part of the city, the favors of former Boards having been confined to the lower and out Wards of the city, nearly altogether.

There was another subject, in some measure similar to the last, brought before the Common Council in January, 1818. It was an application from persons residing and owning property in the vicinity of James Slip, requesting that the waters between Roosevelt Street and James Slip might be purchased by the Corporation for a public basin, to be especially used by the market boats bringing produce to the city. This I opposed, first because we were unable to pay for it without borrowing, the situation of the finances not warranting an expenditure of any description except for ordinary disbursements. - - - - The application was referred to the usual committee, of whom the Alderman of that Ward, and who kept his store in the immediate vicinity of the improvements, was the chairman. The Committee reported shortly after the reference in favor of the project, and as an inducement to adopt their reports they told the Board that the whole cost to the public would be only \$6000. I attempted to show by actual calculation, that the cost would be, at least three times the sum reported. - - - - The report was finally adopted by the Common Council and the necessary steps taken to put the corporation in possession of the property. This is affected by a jury chosen for the purpose, who included in their valuation by the evidence produced on both sides of the question. The valuation of the property

between Roosevelt and Jones Streets amounted to \$21,500. instead of \$6000 estimated by the committees, and my estimate of the cost of this property to the public was completely verified. - - - -

The private interest which so evidently actuated the movement of this measure filled us with disgust, and I therefore opposed it in every practicable shape and consequently incurred the displeasure of those who were pressing the matter to a favorable decision. The then Alderman of that Ward with whom I had been on the most intimate terms of friendship, carried his resentment so as to induce some of the cartmen who resided in my Ward to vote against me at the next election for members of the Common Council. These puny efforts of his had no effect on my election, as my majority was greater than ever, but it taught me that I had placed confidence in a man who was unworthy of my regard, for if a man is to be debarred the free exercise of his opinion in public matters, merely because it may not square with that formed by those interested in the question, then there is an end to all freedom in thought or action, and our boasted Republican institutions are but a name. I had several times been told by those who thought they saw their interest in having this measure carried through, that if I owned property in the vicinity my feelings and conduct would be different from what they were. I did not believe them, however, and more to convince my opponents that they were wrong, than the expectation of profit from the purchase, I did buy a piece of property in the neighborhood for which I paid \$12,000 in cash and shortly after recorded my vote in opposition to the measure. I claim no merit for this act, for I have ever held it is a sacred duty, incumbent upon every public man to forego upon all questions his private interest should it interfere with those of the public, and I

trust I have always acted upon this principal and hope ever so to act.

(January, 1828)

In 1817 there was an institution established in this city for the instruction of the deaf and dumb and in July, 1818, a memorial was presented to the Common Council by the directors of this institution, praying for public aid in conducting its concerns. The petition was referred to a committee, of whom I was the first named and therefore considered as chairman. We visited the school and witnessed the exercises of the pupils and the manner of teaching them and became strongly impressed with a belief of its utility. I was accordingly directed by the committee to report in favor of the petition. The following report was prepared accordingly. - - - - The annual expense of the present establishment, although very limited in its numbers, cannot be estimated at a less sum than \$2500. - - - - It has been ascertained that more than sixty of these unfortunate beings are now residents of this city, the greater part of whom, if left in their present ignorance, must sooner or later become chargeable to the public for support. - - - -

The resolution authorized the use of a suite of rooms for the school in the New York Institution, near the City Hall. The Corporation agreed to pay the tuition of ten deaf and dumb scholars at forty dollars each. A donation of \$500 was made to the institution for present uses. - - - - In 1819, I was elected a member of the Board of directors of this institution and have continued to act in that capacity ever since.

(April, 1828)

The federal corporation, (i.e. the municipal administration when in the hands of the Federalists) which was or pretended to be violently opposed to the war with Great Britain, except for the one or two years previous to its termination and when an invasion of the city was threatened, nevertheless found it convenient for party purposes to laud the praises of our naval commander of the gaining of a victory over any of the British soldiers of ships of war. An incidence of this occurred in the victory gained by the United States Ship Hornet commanded by Capt. James Lawrence over the British Ship Beacock in February 1818. On this occasion the Corporation resolved that the freedom of the city be presented to Captain Lawrence, together with a piece of plate, with appropriate devices and inscriptions. In the month of June following however, Capt. Lawrence, who then commanded the ship Chesapeake, was so unfortunate as to lose his life in an engagement with a British ship, the Shannon, which captured the Chesapeake after a bloody battle of several hours; and in September 1817, the Corporation passed another resolution granting the sum of one thousand dollars to each of the two children of Capt. Lawrence, to be vested in United States stock and the interest to be annually added to the principle until they should arrive at legal age, and in the event of the death of either the survivor to receive the whole. Neither of these resolutions however had been carried into effect by the Common Council, and in 1818, five years after the passage of the resolutions, we find the widow of the captain petitioning the Corporation to carry into effect that part of their order, which appropriated one thousand dollars to each of her children. This petition was referred to the Finance Committee of whom I was the Chairman, and on the 28th of

September I reported to the Board a statement of facts and proposed for their concurrence that the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund be instructed to invest the amount granted in 1813, including the interest that would have accrued to the date of investment, the same to be paid the surviving child on her arriving at the age of 18 years. The money was invested accordingly in United States stock, amounting to \$2600 which included principal and interest to 14th of September 1818. - - - - Although I was active in redeeming the pledge of the Corporation to the family of the late Captain Lawrence, I was nevertheless decidedly opposed to the principal upon which that pledge was given. That the Corporation possessed the power to appropriate any amount and to any purpose cannot be doubted, but I have always doubted the propriety of their applying the income of the city to objects foreign to its municipal concerns. The bestowing of legacies upon the children of deceased public officers is certainly a power never contemplated in the City Charter, - - - - and ought never to be exercised without public censure, for if it is once admitted that the principle is a correct one, there is no telling to what heights it may be extended, or what may be the evils that will follow its adoption.

(May, 1828)

The courts established in the city for the recovery of debts not exceeding \$25, were subject to monstrous abuse, owing to the objectionable manner in which they were organized. The city at the time alluded to was divided into ten wards, and a justice was appointed for each, who was authorized to receive certain fees as a compensation for his services and expenses. It was natural that they should make the most of their office while they held it, and in order to

increase the business and income litigation was encouraged, and repeated abuses practiced by the officers such as marshals and constables, were overlooked or winked at by the courts; in fact there was no chance of justice in a tribunal thus conducted. The persons appointed to the office of Justice too, were frequently incompetent to perform the duties, as they had nothing to recommend them but their claims upon the party who appointed them, and the changes in political preponderance were the consequent changes in the men, none of which tended to add respectability or usefulness to the courts. The complaint in fact among our citizens was loud and imposing and an amendment of the system appeared absolutely necessary. In March, 1819, I accordingly presented a plan for the consideration of the Common Council reorganizing the Justice Courts of the city, by reducing the number from 10 to 4 - - - - The plan was referred to a special committee of whom I was the chairman and we reported an act to be presented to the legislature districting the city, excepting the 9th or out ward, into four parts, giving the appointment of the judges to the Council of Appointments, and of the clerks to the Common Council, both to be salary offices, instead of fee, their salary to be fixed by the Board, with other salutary provisions which may be seen by a reference to the act passed by the legislature on the 4th of January, 1820. - - - -

In improving some of the streets by straightening them, particularly Fulton Street, there had been a small strip of old farm streets not required in running the line, and this strip lay in front of some of the lots and prevented the owner from building on the new line. This piece of street, as well as all the old streets of the city, had been held to be the property of the state, inasmuch as all highways while we were colonies were the property of the King, and the state authorities having succeeded that of the

King, they became the property of the state. Several instances having occurred similar to the one alluded to and more of them expected, I proposed as a remedy that the counsel of the Board prepare an act to be transmitted to the Legislature authorizing the Commissioners to value and assess to the Corporation all gores or parts of old streets which may be left out of any street hereafter to be opened or straightened and not required in effecting the improvement, and making it the duty of the corporation to offer to the owner of the ground lying in the rear of each gores possession of the same on their paying the value as designated by the Commissioner of Assessments. The act was passed by the Legislature and has since been acted on to the mutual benefit of all concerned.

(October, 1828)

The person who was my colleague - - - - in representing the 10th Ward of this city, was one of those politicians who are very tender of their popularity, and he therefore made it a point whenever I urged the propriety of an improvement in the city to oppose it, not in an open and manly manner or on the floor of the house, for he seldom said anything there, but with the members out of session. Thus if a street in the ward we represented required paving he could not vote for it until he heard what was said by those who resided in it, and if there happened to be a lease-holder who had agreed to pay all assessments and whose lease had some years to run, he would urge the propriety of waiting till the lease of such person had expired, and thus the ward was and is the worst regulated ward in the city, for no sooner was one lease out with these people but another was taken and that too upon the same terms as the last. The Bowery, one of the most public avenues in the city, was in a wretched state,

more than two-thirds of it was unpaved, and that part which had been paved was so worn as to make traveling over it dangerous. I consulted my colleagues on the propriety of obtaining an ordinance for repairing this street, but he declined giving it his support as it had not been petitioned for. I told him however that I considered it necessary and would therefore take the responsibility upon myself, and I offered a resolution accordingly directing the street committee to inquire and report on the propriety of newly paving the Bowery. This resolution was passed on the 25th September, 1818, but the out door influence of my colleague prevented the committee from reporting on it, while he continued a member of the Board. At the next annual election of Charter Officers this gentleman was sent to the Assembly and I was raised to the office of Alderman of the Ward. A short time after this occurrence I was met in the street by my former colleague in the Common Council, and in conversation he observed he now thought the Bowery ought to be paved, and wished me to urge the Committee to report in its favor. I made no reply, but thought the more. Here was a striking instance of the time serving spirit by which weak politicians are guided. The propriety of the measure I recommended could not but strike conviction even in the weak mind of my colleague, but he was intimidated from acting by the fear that he would lose some of his popularity with the leaseholders, who in point of numbers were but a small proportion of those interested in the improvement; but now the scene is changed and as he is out of the Board and cannot be blamed for a measure on which he has no vote, he is willing that it should be carried into effect! - - - -

The Corporation Ordinances prohibit the sale of butchers' meat at any place in the city except the Public Markets. In violation of this law however, meat was sold in the upper part of the city both in the streets and in the

houses of the butchers. - - - - I found on examining the subject and ascertaining the opinion of the people residing at a distance from the public markets, that an accommodation of some kind was absolutely necessary, and I proposed to these butchers the erection of a small market in some central place, where they might have stalls on the same conditions that the butchers in the other markets had. This met their approbation and I accordingly brought the subject before the Board and obtained a report from the Market Committee recommending the erection of a small market in Grand, near Essex Street, which we agreed to call the Essex Market. - - -

Another subject which I will allude to as being serviceable to the Ward was the concentrating (at Grand Street) of the two ferries to Williamsburg which ran from the foot of Grand and Delancey Streets, - - - - and by that means inducing the use of better boats on the ferry, and opening the slip at Delancey Street for a public slip, which was much wanted, there being at that time no slip with depth of water sufficient to admit the wood and market boats to float in it. The improvement was effected without expense to the city of any amount whatever. In fact in every measure advocated by me one leading principle was adhered to, namely to effect the object with the least expense practicable.

My principal attention was always directed to the finances of the city, and every measure having a bearing upon that object claimed and had my serious consideration. For this course I had the best of reasons, namely the lessening of the taxes which hung heavy on the necks of the people and at the same time relieving the Treasury from the embarrassed situation in which I found it when I became a member of the Common Council. I had observed in the course of my investigations that a considerable amount of the taxes was annually lost by the non-collection of the arrearages. The Collectors of the several wards are bound by the law to

collect the assessed taxes by a given time and to make return of those collected to the City Treasurer, at the same time to declare under oath that they have used due diligence in the collection and that they were unable to find the personal property of those indebted in order to distrain for the amount due. After making this return and taking the oath required by law, the practice was to permit the Collectors to retain the books in their possession and to collect the arrearages as circumstances, convenience or interest might dictate. The consequence of all this was that a large portion of these arrearages was annually lost to the public for want of due attention and diligence in their collection. Errors were committed by some of the Collectors in neglecting to credit the delinquent for the amount he had paid, and others there was reason to believe applied the money thus received to their private purposes - while much injustice was done to the tax paying inhabitants of the wards in compelling them to make good these deficiencies by annually adding them to the amount assessed and raised. In order to provide a remedy for these evils I induced the Finance Committee to recommend to the Common Council an act to be submitted to the legislature, authorizing the creation of an officer to be styled the Collector of Arrearages with the same power to distrain &c. possessed by the Ward Collectors and authorizing further a charge of ten percent interest on all taxes in arrears until paid. This act was passed and a Collector appointed who was allowed a percentage on the amount collected. The result of this measure has been an annual saving of several thousand dollars to the Corporation which otherwise would have been lost to them through sheer negligence.

(October, 1828)

In order that you may have some idea of the derangement of the city finances, it may be proper to state that the interest on the money borrowed from time to time from the Mechanics Bank had remained due for more than a year, and on being pressed for the payment the Common Council had resorted to a further loan for the purpose and an additional debt of \$16,167 was created by issuing a bond for that amount which went to satisfy the interest then due and unpaid on the loan from the bank, thus forming the interest into principal upon which interest must again be paid; a system which if pursued sufficiently long would bankrupt a nation. The time had now arrived however, when we were enabled to relieve the embarrassments of the Treasury in a small degree at least by the sale of the block of ground at the foot of Dey and Fulton Streets. The block was divided into twenty-two lots and sold one with the other for more than six thousand dollars each or a sum total of \$140,000.

(November, 1828)

Having in my last reverted to the opening of a new set of books in the Comptroller's Department, it may be proper to give some reason why the measure was adopted.

The city having been held as a British garrison during the whole of the Revolutionary War, there was no civil government in operation, but in 1783, on the return of our citizens from exile, the city government was re-organized. The first Comptroller appointed opened his books upon a plan that no doubt seemed to him proper but to my view by no means calculated to elicit dispatch or accuracy. In assessing the city tax in that part of the city under cultivation as gardens and farms, and beyond the bounds fixed for lighting with lamps, the amount of tax assessed is much less than the lighting and watching cost. For instance if the whole tax is

\$180,000, and the lighting and watching cost \$50,000 the assessment on the outer part of the city is only their proportion of the \$100,000 while the part lighted and watched is assessed for their proportion of the \$100,00 and the \$50,000 in addition. The first Comptroller therefore deemed it necessary to open two sets of books, one for the expenses of the whole city, and one for the out ward, when in fact it was only necessary to open separate accounts in the same ledger for these two objects, if it was at all necessary to keep separate accounts, for which I have as yet been unable to perceive any good reason; for after the tax was apportioned and the assessment laid there was an end of the matter, so far at least as it interested the citizens who paid the money; as the great object was to lay the tax according to the benefits received.

The transactions of the Corporation at this period, (1783) when the population was only 23,000, must have been very limited indeed when compared to 1820, when it amounted to 150,000; and therefore the number of accounts were few in proportion. When the present Comptroller came into office, he found the books kept in the manner described. There were two journals and two ledgers, and the heads of accounts in these ledgers were the same in 1820 as they were thirty years previous, although the transactions had multiplied three fold. An account was opened for contingent expenses to which was carried originally small items of expense, for which there was no appropriate account opened, and instead of opening new accounts for new objects of expense the Comptroller carried every new disbursement to this account of contingent, which frequently amounted to sixty or seventy thousand dollars. Now the object of opening a new set of books was to remedy these defects, and instead of two sets of books I directed when indispensable that auxiliary books should be used, and that several of the annual expenses which

had been carried to the contingent account should be carried to accounts under appropriate heads to (in) the ledger.

In the month of December, 1819, I entered upon a thorough examination of the city finances in order that the necessary amount of taxes for the ensuing year might be ascertained and an application be made to the Legislature for the annual tax law. I found that floating or temporary debt due the Corporation in bonds issued to the bank and to individual creditors amounted to the sum of \$302,705. There was due the state for arrearages of state tax since, 1815, \$34,789. The difference in the cash accounts between the Treasurer and Comptroller at that time, was \$11,967; the bills of credit issued during the war and still in circulation unredeemed were \$28,950 making a total to be provided for of \$378,411. This was the first expose of the kind ever made to the Board and the first attempt of an estimate of the probable receipts and expenditures; at least no trace of anything of the kind could be found on the minutes, and it was not to be expected therefore that it should be free from errors. The main object with me was first to establish some data by which the lowest amount of taxes necessary to meet the annual disbursements might be ascertained. Second, to place before the Common Council a true statement of the city finances, in order that they might act understandingly in voting away the public money. Third, to make such an exposure of the past transactions and the present conditions of the affairs of the city, as would tend to deter members from incurring unnecessary expenditures and that would induce them to adopt a course of retrenchment which in time might relieve the City Council from the embarrassments they experienced. In order to provide for this temporary debt, together with the ordinary expenses of the Corporation for the year, I recommended that the taxes be raised to \$260,000 and that authority be obtained from the

legislature to obtain a loan, not exceeding \$400,000, and at an interest of, not exceeding, six percent. These recommendations were adopted, and the acts requested were passed into law by the legislature. For further particulars, I must refer to the printed reports in a volume entitled Mayor's Reports.

A destructive storm which occurred in the summer of 1818 had torn away the whole of the bulkhead which supported the promenade at the Battery. This bulkhead was originally composed of logs of wood and it was now proposed to build it up of stone, and to extend it about 200 feet into the river. The expense of the improvement was estimated at two hundred thousand dollars, but those who proposed the project suggested no means for raising the money that was to defray this heavy expenditure.

I was opposed to the measure as then proposed, first because the means for carrying it into effect were not pointed out; second, because the extension of the wall 200 feet into the river was unnecessary and would tend to waste the public resources without an adequate benefit; and third, because the improvement being in a great measure local it ought to be paid for in proportion to the benefit derived by the property in the vicinity, it being in point of convenience of no real advantage to the upper wards, and therefore the assessment on them ought to be small in proportion to the lower ones. The subject was accordingly postponed. In May, 1819, I proposed a resolution which was passed referring the whole subject to a committee, and I was named as their Chairman. At our first meeting I proposed that the line of the bulkhead should only be extended into the river 50 feet, instead of 200 feet as formerly proposed, and that the expense of the improvement should be assessed on the wards in proportion, as near as may be, to the benefit to be derived. With some difficulty a majority of the Committee

was induced to agree to my propositions and on the 31st of the month I reported the result of our deliberations to the Board. The resolution attached to the report was in substance that the Street Commissioner should enter into a contract for sinking a reef of stone on the line designated by the Committee, preparatory to the building of the contemplated wall, and that the counsel should prepare the draft of an act to be presented to the legislators authorizing the Corporation to assess upon the real and personal estate of this city a sum not exceeding \$180,000, in installments of \$25,000 each year, and that the said sum should be raised upon the property in the respective wards in the following proportions. 1st Ward \$6666. 2nd Ward \$5.000. 3rd Ward \$5000. 4th Ward \$2334, 5th Ward \$1666, 6th Ward, \$1534, 7th Ward \$1000, 8th Ward \$1000, and 10th Ward \$1000, accounting in all to \$25,000. These resolutions were adopted, and the law applied for was enacted by the Legislature. The plan was thus carried into effect with as much economy as practical and with some degree of equality, at least in raising the means, as the upper wards which were in no other way benefited than as to the general improvement of the city, paid but a small proportion of the assessment, while those near the improvement contributed largely.

I became every day more and more impressed with the importance of the concerns committed to the guidance of the Common Council and of the necessity there was that the executive officers of the Board should not only be men of talent and worth, but that every embarrassment should be removed from their way which tended to retard or hinder them in the performance of their duty. The duty of the Mayor as a judge of the Court of Sessions prevented him from paying any attention to the municipal concerns of the city. Twelve days in every month of the year were occupied on the bench, and whatever his inclination might have been, the duties of the

court precluded the possibility of his ever becoming an efficient member of the Common Council, or to gain any useful information on the general concerns of the city. With this impression I offered the following resolution which was adopted and referred to the Committee of which I was a member. "Resolved that it be referred to the Committee on applications to the legislature to consider and to report on the expediency of petitioning for an amendment of the City Charter so as to relieve the Mayor of the city from the duties incumbent on him as a Judge of the Court of Sessions and the appointment of a First Judge of the county to perform said duty." - - - -

(November, 1828)

During the last war with Great Britain it became necessary to erect fortifications in several places on the island of New York, on Long Island and other places in the vicinity of the city, and owing to the difficulty with which money was raised by the General Government, advances to a large amount were made by the Corporation for the aforesaid object. The accounts for these advances had all been audited and allowed by the United States Treasury, except the sum paid for damage done the owners of the land on Brooklyn Heights on Long Island. In 1817 there was a mission sent to the seat of government, consisting of the Counsel of the Board and one of the Aldermen in order to obtain a settlement, but they returned without effecting anything. In consequence of a conversation I had with General Morton, the clerk of the Common Council, with whom this subject was familiar, I determined to make an attempt to recover this money which was withheld from the city from a mere technicality in the manner of making out the vouchers. I accordingly laid the subject before the Finance Committee and

explained the objection made to a settlement at the Department of War. A report was agreed on requesting the authority of the Board to select and dispatch a person to the City of Washington, in order to effect an adjustment of the accounts. This report was presented in December, 1819, and was adopted unanimously. General Morton was accordingly dispatched, and in February 1820, we had the satisfaction to inform the Common Council in a report drawn up for the occasion, that we had, pursuant to the authority given us, selected General Morton to proceed to the seat of government for the purpose of enforcing the claims of the city against the United States, that he had so far effected the object of his mission as to procure a settlement of all the accounts except one small item, and orders had been issued for payment from the first unappropriated balance in the Treasury. It was a year after this however, before the money was received, for in December, 1820, we made our first report on this subject, when we informed the Board that we had received from the United States the sum of \$36,247 which had been deposited in the City Treasury. Thus was this large sum of money saved to the city, which had been abandoned by the Common Council as lost and unrecoverable. - - - -

In the fall of 1819, a tremendous fire occurred at Savannah, Ga. which destroyed property to a very large amount and left many of the inhabitants of that city destitute of a shelter for the winter. Applications were made to our citizens for relief. Meetings were held and committees appointed to collect contributions in the several wards, and a large and respectable committee was raised to petition the Corporation on the subject. At the request of this Committee a special meeting was held on the 27th of January, 1820, at which meeting they presented a petition praying that the Common Council would appropriate \$20,000 as a donation to the sufferers by the fire at Savannah. After this petition was

read, one of the members arose and made some remarks in opposition to the request. No other member appearing inclined to speak, I arose and observed briefly that I felt a great degree of diffidence in opposing a measure as benevolent in its object and which came before us from so respectable a source, but although I felt sincere sympathy for the sufferings of the inhabitants of one of our sister cities, and would go as far as any individual to relieve them, still I deemed it to be my duty as a member of that Board to vote against the petition, because from the best of my judgment, the powers delegated to us by the Charter of the city and by the understanding of our constituents did not authorize the act; for if we might put our hands in the pockets of our fellow citizens and draw out \$20,000 for this object today, we might with equal propriety on the morrow bestow \$100,000 for any foreign object that might present itself, and which might appear of sufficient importance and might excite the feelings and sympathy of the Common Council as the present had done. In fine, I had come to the conclusion after giving the subject the best consideration in my power that the Corporation was not authorized to appropriate the public money except for local purposes in which the citizens generally had an interest, and that their powers were confined to the municipal concerns of the City of New York and not to the giving [Of] relief to the distressed or unfortunate of other parts of the United States. - - - -

There can be no doubt I think - - - - that neither the Charter of the city nor the act of the Legislature in their spirit mean to convey the authority to the Common Council to expend the money raised by taxes on our fellow citizens for objects foreign to the government, improvement, safety and preservation of the inhabitants and their property; and therefore that in equity and justice the large sums expended annually in mere show and parade, in jaunts of

pleasure and in numerous instances that might be named, ought not to be continued or allowed. But it is useless to contend against these things while we have a popular government without check of any sort on their proceedings, and while the people are led in the choice of representatives in the Common Council more by party feelings than by their true interests or that of their posterity.

(November, 1828.)

The floating debt of the Corporation in outstanding bonds was still large in amount, and for several of the bonds held by individuals we were paying seven percent interest, and for those held by the bank six percent. In order to lessen the public expenditure by a reduction of this interest I conceived a plan of taking a loan at five percent of \$200,000. Previous to bringing my plan before the Board I consulted one or two influential persons in the money market as to the probability of its success and having received some encouragement I proposed to the Finance Committee, and on the 12th of June, 1820, brought it before the Board in a report prepared for the purpose. In this report I set forth the authority given the Corporation to fund and create a stock, at the interest not exceeding six percent per annum; that the then funded debt amounted to \$900,000 bearing an interest of six percent, and that this debt would be payable to its holders in the year 1826; that the Sinking Fund had been in operation seven years and had sunk of the debt an average sum annually of \$26,373; that upon this data the aforesaid debt could not be extinguished by the Sinking Fund before the year 1840; that the outstanding bonds amounted to \$264,483. and that in the opinion of the Committee a loan may be contracted at this time upon more favorable terms than heretofore, particularly if the period of redemption shall be

considerably extended; and that under present impressions they see no objections to extending it to the year 1850. The report closed with a resolution directing the Comptroller to advertise, and open a book for subscribers to a loan at five percent, interest payable quarterly. The report was adopted and books opened accordingly. In order to give a countenance to the loan, I commenced the subscription myself and took \$5600 of the stock. It was but a short time in being filled, for before I left the bank the whole amount was subscribed for. As the money came in it was faithfully applied to the extinguishment of the floating debt, the object for which the loan was contracted. - - -

I also noticed the fees allowed the Collector of taxes and stated their amount. I contended that they were much too high under present circumstances, and proposed their reduction to an amount that would save the public at least \$2000 annually. I at the same time suggested for the consideration of the Board a plan for collecting the taxes that would save more than half the expense. It was to employ a single collector, instead of one for each ward, who should hold his office in some central part of the city and receive the taxes on certain days to be fixed for the purpose; and in order to prove the feasibility of the plan, I referred to the method pursued by the United States in collecting the war taxes, and also to the uniform practice of the city of Charleston, S.C., where the taxes are collected by a single person, without any difficulty and with great dispatch. - - -

(November, 1828.)

In 1816 the gentlemen who composed the Board of Common Council adopted the measure, by applying to the Legislature, for an act authorizing them to take the block of ground between Beekman Street and Fulton Slip for the purpose

of erecting thereon a large and extensive market, and they estimated the total expense at \$220,000. The embarrassed state of the finances when these gentlemen left the Board and for a long time after, precluded all prospect of carrying into effect this extensive plan. The law still existed however and the persons owning property in the neighborhood and who would be materially benefited by the project had not lost sight of the matter. In the latter part of December, 1820, a very destructive fire occurred in one of the buildings on the block of ground alluded to. The whole of the stores on the premises, except one fire proof building, were destroyed and advantage was taken of this circumstance by those immediately interested, to urge the Common Council on the subject of building the market. Petitions were circulated in all directions and signatures solicited from residents and non-residents. Some of these petitioners insisted that the fire was an act of providence in favor of the measure, and called upon the Common Council to perform a duty so miraculously indicated to be a proper and righteous one. There always has been and always will be men who are guided, not by their own judgment in public matters, but by what they consider the popular opinion, which appeared to be the case in the present instance, for on the presentation of these petitions, although it was as plain as day that the promoters of the measure were only looking to their own interest, yet several members of the Common Council, who but a short time previous were persuaded that it was not (in) the interest of the city that the market should be built on the spot alluded to, now changed their opinion and advocated the measure. I was opposed to it because it was not immediately necessary, as the old Fly Market would answer all the purpose of our citizens for a few years longer at least; because it was impolitic to increase the city debt to an amount more than \$200,000 at a moment too when we had scarcely begun to

feel the effects of our economy; because the site was not the most proper, as according to my views the piece of ground including Fletcher Street and where the old Fish Market stood at the foot of Maiden Lane was far preferable to the spot selected. It was partly on the old site, where the people had been in the habit of marketing, and in this respect was more convenient. A market built on this spot would not cost the public, including the ground to be taken, more than half the sum that it would on the proposed spot, and besides this by removing the market up town it would become necessary to build one at the old slip or some other convenient place in the lower part of the city, and this at an expense of perhaps \$50,000 all of which would be saved by erecting on the old location. There were several of the butchers in the old market who held stalls, bought at auction of the Corporation, and who claimed a large sum of money as an indemnity for their right in these stalls. These claims might have been amicably settled if the market was built on the old site by giving them stands somewhat similar to those to be taken from them.

On the 29th January, 1821, a committee was appointed to whom the petition &c. on the subject of the market was referred and I was named as one of the committee. At our first meeting I discovered that a majority of the gentlemen composing this committee were in favor of the measure, but at the same time disposed to act with moderation. - - - I accordingly proposed that in order to extinguish the debt to be created by carrying into effect the proposed project, \$15,000 should be raised annually by tax, which, together with the income from the market, should be added to the Sinking Fund; that the stalls for the butchers and the stands for the fishermen and hucksters, should be rented at auction to the highest bidder; that this last regulation should apply to all the markets in the city; that \$200,000 authorized to

be funded by the act of 1820, be funded in such sums and at such times as means may be required, to defray the expense of erecting the said market.

Several important objects were to be effected by these measures. 1st. the tax, in that this addition to the city debt might not be left as a dead weight upon our posterity. 2nd. the renting of the stalls &c. a measure of such importance and well calculated to increase the revenue of the city. The plan then in operation was to charge the butchers a fee on each head of cattle sold in lieu of rent and the country people, hucksters, etc., were provided with stands free of charges. The butchers by these terms were induced to neglect their business, for if they brought nothing to market, the stall was unoccupied and they paid no rent. It induced some of them also to resort to deception for the purpose of avoiding the payment of fees, and instances had occurred where the return made to the clerk of the market, was for a much less number of heads than sold, and in many instances the fees were unpaid for a length of time and in some were totally lost by the failure of the occupant of the stall. The liberty given the hucksters was the means of excluding the country people almost entirely from the market, as every vacant space was filled by them. All those evils have been completely remedied by the proposed measure, and the revenue was raised from not exceeding \$10,000 to about \$18,000 and the proceeds of the market at this date amounts to near \$25,000. - - - -

All these measures as proposed by me were adopted by the Committee and sanctioned by the Common Council; but the authority to levy an annual tax for the extinguishment of the debt was not passed into law by the Legislature, owing as it was said to an objection made by some wise delegate from this city, who contended that the income from the property would

be sufficient to sink the debt in the course of a few years without further aid. - - - -

(November, 1828.)

The act to relieve the Mayor from his judicial duties, as already stated, passed the Legislature on the 27th February, 1821. Reports were in circulation naming several persons as candidates for the office, and among others my name was mentioned at Albany as being one. I uniformly denied however having any information of the act, neither did I feel the least inclination for enjoying that honor. About 8 or 10 days before the appointment was made I received a letter from one of the members informing me that the Council of Appointment intended to bestow on me the office. I immediately wrote him on the subject that I had no wish to be appointed. - - - - On the 6th March following the appointment was made. - - - - I had a strong contest in my mind whether I ought to accept the office or not, but finally the advice of friends and a belief that I ought to make good the declaration I had frequently made that any man of ordinary talents not bred to the law, as all our former Mayors were, might perform the duties of the station with credit to himself and benefit to the city, induced me to accept it. - - On the 12th day of March, 1821, I took the oath prescribed by the Charter, and proceeded in the execution of the duties enjoined on the Mayor of the City of New York. For several months after commencing this new avocation, I found the performance of duty very arduous; but by dint of study I gained sufficient information to enable me to perform every duty incumbent upon me with tolerable ease, except the drawing acknowledgments of deeds, and some other law papers,

and even these, upon emergency, I was able to perform from precedents in the office. The whole correspondence of the office, the proclamations issued as President of the Board of Health, or offering rewards for the detecting of offenders against the laws, and other papers intended for publication and not infrequently reports of committees, were written by myself. - -

The annual expenditure in employing the convicts from our penitentiary on the roads and avenues amounted to between \$5000 and \$6000 while the amount paid the men on the old roads was in no wise diminished. This appeared to me unaccountable, and I frequently turned the thing in my mind and sought information from the Road Committee and the Commissioners of the Alms House; but the only conclusion was that the earnings of the convicts did not exceed the expense of the wear and tear of the clothes, tools and the pay of their keepers. In order that we should have a fair view of the matter, I proposed that there should be a meeting of the Committee with the Commissioners on the Avenues that a personal examination might be had, and by that means an opinion formed whether it would not be more for the interest of the public that the Council should be employed in clearing and fencing the waste lots belonging to the Corporation, and that the repairing of the roads be placed altogether in the hands of contractors. I thought I saw more than one advantage in an arrangement of this sort, first the numerous acres of common land belonging to the corporation, and which was worse than useless as it then lay, might be brought into a state of cultivation and made to produce sufficient vegetables at least for the use of the penitentiary; and second the withdrawing these men from the public gaze by sending them to more retired places, which would not only increase the quantity of their labor by their attention being undisturbed, but add something to the punishment by the

solitude of the place, compared with that of a public highway.

The Committee together with the Commissioners met accordingly and on the 30th of April, 1821, I presented a report to the Common Council - - - - The report closed by recommending that after so much of the avenues shall have been put in repair, as shall be deemed by the Commissioners necessary, the convicts shall then be employed in grubbing and fencing the public lands, many fields of which then lay in common, which would not only increase the value of the property now laying waste, but would bring it into a state for use and cultivation by the paupers in the Alms House, and thus reduce the expense by the production of food, which otherwise would have to be purchased at the cost of the public. The report was adopted and ordered to be printed as Mayor's Report, page 22. The result of this measure was that from 60 to 80 acres of unproductive and waste land was brought under cultivation, the stones were cleared off, the rocks blasted, and a good and substantial stone wall erected around it; and instead of a nominal property, the land is now worth from \$200 to \$500, and the expense for repairing the roads and avenues does not exceed more than two-thirds of what it cost the public when worked by the convicts. - - - -

(November, 1828)

By the Charter of the city it was the duty of the Mayor to license all the taverns, cartmen, public porters and marshalls. For two or three weeks in each year he was employed in issuing the licenses to tavern keepers and grocers. This was an arduous and responsible duty, and the performance of it was the most irksome and disagreeable of any I had experienced; much of this feeling grew out of the

fact that I was compelled to grant a permission which I was persuaded resulted in evil to the community whose moral as well as physical interest I was bound to protect. It was a case of necessity with me however and although I could not prevent the evil I nevertheless endeavored by all feasible means to lessen it. With this view, I laid before the Common Council in November, 1821, a communication prepared on the subject of taverns and grog shops in which I stated in substance that the increased number of these shops and the universal opinion of their pernicious tendency called loudly for some measure that would effect a reduction in their number. - - - - I accordingly hinted at the subject in my annual report on the state of the finances in January, 1823; and the committee to whom that subject was referred prepared a bill in every respect similar to the one presented in 1822. - - - - We were again defeated in obtaining the passage of the law. While on this subject it may be well to observe that the same act was again transmitted to the legislature in 1824. One of the delegates from this city that year kept a small retail shop of his own and to the shame of the other gentlemen who represented us in the legislature that year, this person was permitted to cut and carve the bill to suit the purpose of himself and those following in the same business. The provisions of this bill, which finally passed into a law which is now in force are that the Alderman and Assistant of the Ward for which the licenses are to be issued shall with the Mayor be the Commissioners; that no more than \$10 shall be charged for a license; and that every person selling liquor except the importer of it shall be bound to take a license. The evils of this act have been severely felt, and the licenses for grog shops have increased under it from 1900 to upwards of 3000.

(December, 1828)

Early in the month of January, 1822, I prepared a statement of the finances upon the same plan as my former reports on that subject. Judah Hammond, Esq. was the Chairman of the Finance Committee at this period, but his private business would not permit him to devote the necessary time to the subject, and fearful that the practice of reporting annually which I had introduced would be entirely omitted, I volunteered my services on the occasion which were accepted by the Committee. In this report besides entering into calculations of the probable receipts and expenditures for the ensuing year, and by that means deciding upon the necessary amount of tax to be levied, I endeavored to call the attention of the Board to the following considerations.

First. Whether the corporation ought not to possess the authority to assess the necessary annual tax upon the whole of the estates, both real and personal, within the city, whether held in trust or otherwise and whether the owner resided in the city or not. Under the law as it then stood persons who employed any amount of capital in business transacted in the city, if they resided out of it, or rather slept out of it, were exempt from taxation; the commission merchants also, who might sell goods to the amount of a million annually, paid no tax for the capital thus employed; the same with property held in trust, the person holding it not being the owner, he could not be taxed. Nearly half the amount of tax levied in this city is for the expense of lighting, watching, and otherwise protecting the property within its limits, and it appeared to be but just that those who shared in the protection afforded should also share in the burden of expenses. There are many of our citizens at this day, who to avoid the heavy assessments here remove to some place out of the city within riding distance, or to Brooklyn, where the taxes are light, while the bulk of their

business is transacted in the city. There is also property to an immense amount placed in the hands of commission merchants, many of them foreigners, who pay nothing toward our taxes, while our own merchants pay on every dollar of the property they possess. The foreign capitalists therefore are placed upon a better footing than our own citizens. (See Mayor's Report, page 50.)

The question of altering the City Charter in order that more deliberation might be had on matters touching private rights in opening streets was agitated the preceding year and a strong remonstrance was presented to the Common Council on the subject by a committee of citizens appointed for the purpose. This memorial was referred to a committee of whom I was a member. We had several meetings with a committee of citizens and discussed with them the principles of their plan, which were in substance that the Common Council should consist of two branches, one of which to be chosen exclusively by freeholders, and each to have a negative upon the proceedings of the other.

I objected to the choice by freeholders only, upon the following grounds; first, because personal property was as largely taxed as real and therefore - - - - the owners of personal estate had as much at stake as the owners of real estate; second, because any man may become a freeholder in the out wards for \$50, and it was understood that no person was assessed for personal estate who was not worth \$100. A man therefore possessing a small lot of ground, worth \$50 or \$100 would enjoy greater rights than he who possessed as many thousands in personal estate and who paid taxes in proportion; third, because when the charter permitted freeholders only to vote for members of Common Council, men were elected no better calculated to serve the public than those who had since been elected by free-suffrage, and often not as good; fourth, because the establishing of any standard

in relation to property in the question of suffrage was out of the question, for there could be no equality of rights upon that principle, as the man owning a lot of ground worth \$100 would enjoy as a freeholder all the privileges of him who owned real estate worth \$50,000 and the supposition that this man of \$100 freehold, was better calculated to represent the interests of the city than he who owned \$10,000. in personal estate was an absurdity; and lastly, because it was asking too much and if persisted in would defeat the application in toto. The people had now enjoyed and exercised the right of free suffrage, and stronger reasons than any which had been argued would be necessary to induce them to abandon it. - - - -

I also noticed the great uncertainty in the annual expenditure; that with all the information collected from the different departments of government and all the care taken in the calculation, I was unable to state with any degree of certainty the amount of expenditure upon any one item, inasmuch as the Common Council was bound by no rule limiting them in the amount of their disbursements; and I cited some recent instances in which large expenditures were ordered that had neither been anticipated or included in the estimate of disbursements for the year. To remedy this growing impropriety, I suggested the necessity there was to make annual appropriations for every item of expenditure, upon the principle adopted by all the state governments, the United States government and all the principle city governments in the Union. None of these suggestions were attended to however, and the only act founded upon the report was the law authorizing the assessment of the amount of tax recommended which was \$250,000.

(January, 1829)

As Chief Magistrate of the city, it became my duty very frequently to visit the Alms House, Bridewell and penitentiary. The first of these establishments is for the use of the poor and destitute, the second for confinement before trial and sentence of those charged with crime and vagrancy, and the third as a place of punishment for criminals.

The principal care and management of all those places by the ordinance of the Common Council are in the hands of five Commissioners of whom the Superintendent of the Alms House is one. The then and present superintendent, Arthur Burtis, Esq., possessed superior qualifications for the office, always eyeing a disposition to improve and better the condition of his charge upon all proper occasions. He was ever ready to hear and profit by my suggestions, particularly such as were calculated to lessen the expense of the establishment, and on this subject we held frequent conferences. Many of the poor in the Alms House were mechanics by profession and although old and infirm were nevertheless able to do something toward the expense of their support. I advised therefore that as many of them as were able to work as shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, &c. should be selected and employed for the use of the house. This suggestion was adopted, and when I visited them a few months after, and inquired how they liked the change, they appeared cheerful and happy and declared that they were much more contented with their situation than when they were unemployed. The result was that nearly all the shoes and clothes worn by the paupers, and by some of the prisoners in the penitentiary were made in the house. There was besides a large quantity of cloth manufactured and used for the garments of the poor. The carpenters were fully employed in making coffins, a large number of which are annually given out to poor families in the city, besides those used for

persons dying in the Alms House and city prisons. There were also blacksmiths, bakers, weavers &c. all of whom were usefully employed, and several of the boys who were brought up in the establishment were put to learning some of these trades, through which means they might become useful citizens. —

(January, 1829)

A very important duty devolved on the Mayor of New York as President of the Board of Health. The numerous provisions of the Ordinances of the Corporation for the preservation of the health of the city, so far as they relate to the correction and removal of nuisances, are placed under the direction of the Mayor, besides which he has a duty imposed upon him by the Act of the Legislature to prevent the introduction of infectious diseases, that require much of his attention and thought. The Act of the Legislature was found to be very defective in its provisions. The city has frequently been deserted in consequence of the introduction of yellow fever from abroad, still vessels that had come from places of doubtful health were permitted to haul to our wharves after undergoing a temporary cleansing and performing a quarantine of four days; and even vessels from ports where the fever was raging at the time of their leaving them, were permitted to unload at quarantine, and send their cargoes by lighters to the city.

The persons named in the Act as authorized to grant permits for vessels to land at the wharves and to bring to the city these cargoes that had been taken from the holds of vessels arriving from sickly ports, were three physicians, namely the Health Officer, the Health Physician, and the Health Commissioner. To these gentlemen was this important branch of our medical police intrusted. Two of them held

that the yellow fever originated on our own shores, that being of domestic instead of foreign origin there could be no danger from the landing of a vessel, no matter where she came from, particularly after having undergone a purification for four days at quarantine. The other, namely the Health Officer, felt no disposition to assume any more responsibility than was clearly enjoined upon him by the law. In proof of this I will only state one fact. The law directed that vessels arriving from ports where yellow or malignant fevers existed at the time of their departure should discharge their cargoes at the quarantine establishment, and that the vessel should be whitewashed, ventilated &c. and perform a quarantine of thirty days. Now it is quite clear to me that the intention of the law was that the cargoes should not only be discharged but landed at quarantine and detained for ventilation; but the practice was to discharge the cargo of a vessel having sickness on Board into a lighter, bring it up to the city and land it on our most frequented wharves, often in a few hours after it had been taken from the tainted atmosphere of a vessel just arrived from a sickly port, or one on Board of which there had been deaths by yellow fever. The impropriety of this practice was admitted by all, but it had been followed for several years and the doctor did not wish to incur the displeasure of the merchants by enforcing the law and thus remedying the evil complained of. The Mayor had no control in these matters and could only give his opinion and advice, which had little effect on these learned doctors.

The summer of 1822 was one of extreme heat and every precaution was therefore resorted to in order that all internal cause of sickness might be removed. For this purpose I personally visited various parts of the city inhabited by the most indigent of our population, such as Bank Street, now Market Street, and Collect Street, now

Centre Street, places of such filth and impurity, and I directed the correction of all the nuisance perceptible to the eye or senses, and I made a practice when ordering a thing done to examine and see for myself that it was performed. These precautions did not prevent the introduction of the disease we so much dreaded, for in the latter part of July in that year the yellow fever made its appearance at the foot of Rector Street, near the Hudson River. This part of the city had always been considered one of the most healthy on the map, and after the most strict examination of the premises no nuisance of any magnitude was discovered there. The disease raged until the first of November following, when it ceased. Throughout the whole of this disastrous period I did not miss a single day in attending to the duties of the office I held, the arduousness of which, connected with the risk I ran of contracting the disease may be better conceived than told. - - -

On the 25th of November, 1822, I presented a written communication to the Common Council on the subject of the late sickness and the probable means of averting its return to the city. I suggested for their consideration:

1st. The propriety of applying to the Legislature for an amendment of the health law, in order that it might embrace such additional provisions as the experience we had acquired during the program of the sickness would warrant.

2nd. The necessity that existed of erecting in the vicinity of the city a hospital for fever patients.

3rd. That the nuisance arising from foul and improperly constructed sinks ought to be corrected.

4th. The filthy condition of our streets and the necessity of adopting some method more prompt and efficacious than the one in practice for the removal of the dirt.

5th. The burial of the dead in the more populous and exposed parts of the city was adverted to and the

consideration of the Common Council requested on the subject. It was suggested also whether a place should not be provided for storing and ventilating goods arriving from the West Indies during the hot months of the year. And that connected with the health and prosperity of the city was the bringing in of good and wholesome water, which ought never to be lost sight of until its accomplishment was consummated.

{The italics are Mr. Allen's. This is his first mention of a subject which was thereafter to be the chief object of his life, namely the introduction of Croton water to the city.]

The communication was referred to a committee of five members, but the whole burden of revising the health law and introducing the amendments suggested in my communication was thrown on my shoulders. We endeavored to obtain the opinion of the principal medical men in the city on the subject, but owing to the difference of opinion existing among doctors on the question of the origin (whether domestic or foreign) of the disease, no useful information was elicited from that source and we were compelled therefore to depend on our experience as a guide in this important matter.

The new law contained a number of important provisions not to be found in the old one. - - - - All vessels from the West Indies were prohibited from coming nearer the wharves of the city than 200 yards. Cargoes from sickly vessels and vessels from sickly ports were prohibited from coming to the city. The cargoes after being landed for thirty days at some place out of the city and then properly ventilated, were permitted under proper restrictions to be brought to a part of the city designated for the purpose. - -

The old law prohibited the introduction of cotton into the city at any time between the months of June and October. This prohibition not only injured the owner and importer of the article, but the proprietors of storehouses

as well as the trading part of the community generally. The utility of this provision was never made manifest to my sense of propriety, and I was unable to perceive how a bale of cotton coming from a healthy place and brought in a healthy vessel could introduce sickness more than any other description of goods, and I therefore expunged this injurious and objectionable provision and substituted one authorizing the landing in the city of all cotton, except such as was damaged or such as came from a sickly port or was brought in a sickly vessel. The operation of this provision has proved an immense benefit to the city and to those of our citizens engaged in a southern trade, but while it enhanced the income of our own citizens by filling their storehouses with the article, it tended in a measure to injure those who owned stores in Brooklyn, where all the cotton of every description which arrived during the period mentioned above had previously been stored.

For this act of general benefit to the city I received the ill will of a certain person who calls himself a Republican too, and who holds a lucrative office through the influence of the party, but whose Republicanism centers in self alone, merely because he happened to own a store in Brooklyn, and because he feared that his storage would be reduced by the aforesaid measure. I have ever believed that the essential principles of Republicanism were "Measures not men" and that the Republican Party was in opposition to Federal opinions because the holding of those opinions led to the adoption of bad and oppressive measures, but here was a measure acknowledged to be proper on all hands, if the health of the city was not endangered by it, (and the experience of ten years has shown that it was not), opposed on the ground of self interest and that by a man professing to be a patriot of the first water.

(September, 1829)

- - - - The person alluded to in my last, who was instrumental in pulling me down, has since that date been pulled down himself. I had no hand in it however, further than taking sides with and in favor of General Jackson as President of the United States, in preference to John Quincy Adams, while the gentleman alluded to - - - - took sides against the General, thus losing the income of a lucrative office.

- - - - In order that the city might obtain some aid from the state for the erections of a fever hospital which I had recommended to the Common Council, I addressed a letter to Governor Yates and enclosed him at the same time a copy of the communication I had made to the Common Council on the subject, and requested him to notice the subject in his speech at the opening of the next session of the Legislature, provided he could do it consistently with his own views of the matter. This request was complied with on his part, and the Legislature in making a reference of the several matters noticed by the Governor, referred the subject of a fever hospital to a committee of whom one of the members from this city was Chairman. I immediately commenced a correspondence with the Chairman and furnished him with such facts and observations relative to the matter as enabled him to advocate the propriety of our application and with such effect that we obtained the grant of a lottery that netted the city nineteen thousand dollars in cash. The hospital (this building has since been used as the House of Refuge) was commenced during my mayoralty and completed in 1825. It is attached to the Bellevue establishment. - - - -

I prepared an ordinance in conformity to my recommendation on the subject of sinks and privies, which provided that none should hereafter be built, except of stone

and of a designated depth. This was passed into a law by the Common Council and has been ever since acted upon. Previous to the passage of this ordinance, sinks were built of planks and Boards, which in a few years went to decay, when the contents were exposed to the influence of a hot sun and thereby a dreadful nuisance was created. - - - -

The last branch of improvement recommended by the communication to the Common Council of November, 1822, was a partial prevention of the burial of the dead in the populous parts of the city. In this case I prepared an ordinance which prevented the interment in graves and public vaults, leaving the private vaults to be used by their owners as formerly. The objections to opening graves was that the ground composing the burial yards having been filled by the dead, whenever a grave was dug and the earth thrown up, appeared more or less saturated with the remains of decayed bodies, and the sun operating on this mass of corruption impregnated the air for some distance with the disagreeable effluvia. The objection to the public vaults was that they were crammed full of dead bodies and daily opened for the admission of more, which in hot weather tended to injure the atmosphere and in the opinion of many the health of the neighborhood. This could not be said of private vaults, containing but few bodies and opened on an average but once in a number of years. The Common Council however, was determined that the equality should exist in the case of the dead as with the living, and the ordinance was accordingly amended so as to prohibit interments in the city south of Grand Street altogether. - - - -

(September, 1829.)

On the sixth of January, 1823, I again communicated to the Common Council a statement of the moneyed transactions

of the past year, including a detailed statement of receipts and expenditures, the transactions of the commissioners of the Sinking Fund, the amount of debt which had been liquidated by them, the net amount of debt, including the funded debt, as well as the floating or temporary then due, and an estimate of the probable receipts and expenditures for the ensuing year. The result that I arrived at was that a tax of \$330,000 appeared necessary in order to meet the disbursements of the coming year without resorting to temporary loans. The Common Council however refused to ask for more than \$300,000. which was an addition to the preceding year of 450,000. and preferred a temporary loan for the balance, should it become necessary.

On the subject of this annual application to the Legislature for authority to tax ourselves, I doubted whether it comported with the convenience, the dignity or rights of the city to be compelled annually to apply to the Legislature for a law authorizing us to assess and collect the necessary amount of tax for the ordinary expenses of the county, while every other county in the state was authorized to raise such tax as was necessary without application to the legislature for the purpose. I therefore recommended that the Corporation should apply for a law that would authorize them hereafter to assess and levy on the real and personal estate in this county such amount as would be required to pay the annual necessary expenses of the city government; and further that they might raise a portion of the tax from such other sources within the county as they might deem expedient, not reached by the tax on real and personal estate. My object was to give the Common Council authority to raise an internal revenue from the haunts of vice, of profligacy, and luxury, such as the gambling houses, the theatres, shows of all kind (except the scientific public gardens), taverns and grog shops and many other useless if not pernicious callings that

were followed in the city. I ventured to again suggest the propriety and advantage of a single collector of taxes and went into some reasoning on the subject. The heavy expense of our criminal courts was alluded to; and the propriety of obtaining an act directing that the District Attorney, Clerk of the Sessions, and other officers of the court should pay to the City Treasurer the whole amount of fines received by them, was urged. I barely noticed once more the very inadequate price as then fixed for a license to keep a tavern and for running a hackney coach.

Acts were prepared on all these subjects and transmitted to the Legislature for enactment, but none of them were passed except that respecting our criminal courts and the authority to assess in the usual way the annual tax. The alterations effected by the law on the subject of the criminal courts were as follows. Previous to its passage the District Attorney, Clerk of the Sessions &c. were authorized to demand the fees of court from every person tried, either for misdemeanor or felony, and these fees according to their own showing amounted to, in 1822, about \$2500 exclusive of their salaries. The Police Magistrates were altogether fee officers, and there was a strong prejudice in the public feeling that the poor and abandoned wretches who inhabited particular streets in the suburbs of the city were purposely and frequently harassed and imprisoned merely for the sake of extorting from them the usual fee allowed the officer, and not from any disposition to improve their morals or manners or to secure the peace of the city. It was provided by the aforesaid act therefore that the magistrates and their clerks should receive a fixed amount as salary and pay the fees into the City Treasury. - - -

(September, 1829)

In the month of September, 1823, I made a written communication to the Common Council in which I recommended to their serious consideration several subjects that would require the aid of Legislative Acts to carry them into effect. My object in calling the attention of the Board to these matters thus early, was that time might be afforded to consult the members of the Legislature from this city, as I was well aware that unless the application met with the support and approbation of these gentlemen it was useless to apply, as the members from the country would as a matter of course reject such application. - - - -

The second measure I proposed was a provision calculated as I thought to prevent a violation of the law on the subject of alien passengers. This was a subject of much importance to the city, as impositions of much magnitude had been put in operation to evade the provisions of this act. The provisions of the law as it then stood were that no alien should be landed at any place within fifty miles of the city, except that they had first been regularly reported at the Mayor's office and the necessary bonds entered into to save the city from expense during two years from the time of landing for their support, should they at any time during that period require it. In order to avoid this responsibility and in evasion of the provisions of the act, several thousand foreigners had been shipped from the British possessions in North America and landed at Saybrook and Black Rock in the state of Connecticut, distant about 60 miles from New York, to which city they proceeded by land. The provision I recommended to correct this evil was to make it a felony for any captain or owner of a vessel, who should land any alien passenger in any part of the United States, with the intention of such alien to proceed by land to the city, unless the necessary security was furnished by such captain

or owner that such persons would not become chargeable to the city for the time limit as aforesaid. - - - -

(September, 1829)

At a meeting of the Common Council held on the 19th of January, 1824, I presented them with my annual report on the state of the finances. This was the last communication I had the honor of making to the Board, as on that evening they made the choice of William Paulding, Jr. as Mayor; and on the 26th of the same month I administered to him the Oath of Office and resigned the seat I had occupied nearly three years. - -

The statute law of this state made it a condition, that in order to act as presiding Judge of our County courts the person must be Counsellor of the Supreme Court; and it was the duty of the Mayor of this city, pursuant to the provisions of the charter, to preside in the Court of Sessions, which court was occupied in trying criminal causes six months in each year. Hence it became necessary that none but a Counsellor in the Supreme Court could serve as Mayor of the city. There was no good reason that I could perceive why the selection should be confined to lawyers only, while all the important duties of the Mayor except those of Judge might be performed by any man of ordinary capacity and industry, who would willingly bend his mind to the business of the office and the interests and prosperity of the city. - - - -

Their attention was so constantly engrossed with the business of the courts, that they had no time if they were so inclined to devote to the official and other concerns of the city; and hence there was no head to the Corporation that might be consulted upon extraordinary occasions; no one to

point out to the Common Council the measures which good policy and righteous government might call for; but everything was left to the guidance of the members of the Board, who though perfectly honest and many very intelligent, had no time to devote to the thought and reflection upon important matters of city government and except the subjects petitioned for and referred to committees for consideration, the acts of the Common Council were and are all passed upon with little or no deliberation whatever.

Under these circumstances I concluded that the proposed measure respecting the duties of the Mayor would be the means, if he was so inclined, of enabling him to keep the Common Council informed on all matters relative to city affairs and more particularly on the subject of finances, perhaps the most important of all. The duties to be performed by the Mayor, after he was relieved from presiding in courts, were sufficient for any one man to perform provided he faithfully executed them; but to execute them well and impartially he must possess a firmness and independence of mind not usually met with in those who are the most likely to be selected for that office. It is to be lamented, but not usually remedied, that too often those who are looking for the office are more enamored with the honor and emoluments to be received than impressed with the importance of the duties to be performed, and in fact if any judgment may be formed from what is passing before us daily, we must be compelled to acknowledge that no man can hold the office long who righteously performs his duty. If as far as he is enabled, he enforces the observance of the laws of the Corporation, which it is his especial duty to do, he naturally must create enemies and this far he suffers in his popularity. The responsibility of licensing proper persons as retailers of spirituous liquors, as cartmen, porters, marshals, hack-drivers, keepers of intelligence offices &c. is imposed upon

the Mayor, and if any of those selected conduct themselves unworthily it is made his duty to withdraw their licenses, but in every case where this duty is performed he may expect to raise up an enemy. If he recommends to the Common Council any measure of public utility, it is a hundred to one but it crosses the private interests of some individual or class of individuals and consequently an opposition is raised to the measure and to him who recommended it. Thus if an improvement is recommended which may tend to a more efficient performance of duty, or a lessening of the public expenditure in the Watch Department, the Fire Department or any other of the numerous offices under the control of the Common Council, there is a community of interests raised up against the measure forthwith; and if the measure relates to the first class, you have five or six watchmen to contend with; if to the second, twelve or fifteen hundred, and so on. A man therefore who wishes to hold his office and make fair weather with these storms of interest and selfishness, must study his part well and act with great caution and circumspection. That the city will suffer under this state of things both in its finances and its government cannot be doubted; but who is there that can propose a remedy likely to be adopted and that will eradicate the evil? A question not easily answered.

When the appointment of Mayor was vested in the Common Council by the new Constitution, instead of being left with the Governor and Senate, as it should have been, an irreparable injury was done to the city and the independence of the Chief Magistrate was destroyed. Men are fond of distinction and particularly public men and hence the fondness for office, even where there is no emolument attached to it. This observation may be applied with much propriety to many of those who serve in the common Council, for we find them consenting to serve at a sacrifice of interest, merely for the honor of the station and with little

or no emolument attached to it. What a man is pleased with he will not part with lightly; and upon this principle only can I account for some of the acts of our Corporation, by which it would appear that many of its members are so far influenced by those of their constituents, whose exertions may by possibility prevent their election, as to commit acts which their better judgment under different circumstances would condemn.

This was fully exemplified by the election of Mayor in 1824; for in no instance have those who voted for Mr. Paulding refused the need of commendation to the person removed, both for his industry in the discharge of duty and for indefatigable exertions to promote the prosperity and welfare of the city. The only reason ever given, if reason it may be called, was that people complained that there was too much sternness in his manners; but the true reason was that in the correction of abuses, of the kind already alluded to, he naturally created enemies among the self-interested who set up a hue and cry for his removal; and those whose fears were to be operated upon did not possess firmness sufficient to stand the blast, preferring the sacrifice of him to the loss of a few votes for themselves.

There was another quarter from which I was assailed, and which no doubt had its influence in deciding the question. The lawyers with some honorable exceptions were pretty generally opposed to me; first because they considered me the author of the law which took from their possession the exclusive right of serving as Mayor, and second because - - there were frequent cases arising under the laws that were cognizable before the Mayor, such as runaway slaves and their emancipations, cases under the health law, the withdrawal of licenses &c. that required to be decided summarily and when decided contrary to the views of these gentlemen gave offense, they presuming, and not infrequently

strongly insinuating, that it was absurd to suppose that I was a better judge of the law than they were, who made a business of it; but the fact was that cases of simple statutory provisions, and which seldom came before the courts, are rarely studied by the lawyer as their dependence is upon the decision of the judges; and in cases where no decision was recorded I generally found them profoundly ignorant of the law. Finding them so I was not backward in letting them see that I thought them so, and this naturally created their displeasure and was one of the causes of their opposition. They accordingly resorted to misrepresentations and calumny, and one of the plans adopted by them was to write anonymous letters to the members (of the Common Council) through the post office, some of which were shown to me; and although these epistles contained no direct charge, they no doubt had their influence with some of the new members at least, and tended to increase the majority in caucus against my re-election.

With a knowledge of these facts and the known enmity of one of the Council at least, I confess that I did not feel entirely indifferent to the result; not that I cared for the office, as I had previous to these indications made up my mind to serve only another term if elected, but I disliked the means made use of, and felt sorrow that my well grounded hopes, as I flattered myself they were, of a regular and permanent improvement in the finances should be blasted by the election of a man whose proverbial inattention to business was notorious. I however saw the storm gathering long before it broke upon me and accordingly fortified myself against its effects. When it came, I have reason to believe it will be admitted even by those inimical to me that in quitting the office I betrayed no feeling derogatory to my character as a citizen or to the standing in society which I then held or now hold. The inconsistency of the gentlemen

composing the then Common Council, who admitted all that I could require of them as to the correctness of my conduct as Chief Magistrate and still voted against me, will be more plainly seen by the following resolution which passed the Board unanimously on the evening of my resigning my seat to William Paulding, Junior.

In Common Council January 24, 1824.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Common Council be presented to the Honorable Stephen Allen, late Mayor of this city, for the able and faithful manner in which he discharged the arduous duties of that office. And that he be desired to sit for his portrait to be placed in the gallery of paintings in the City Hall. - - - -

(December, 1829.)

- - - - I have no reason to complain of the general respect awarded me by my fellow citizens during the seven years I served them as one of the magistrates of the city, for on many occasions, both during the period alluded to and since, they have honored me with their confidence. I have frequently been called upon to preside at their public meetings, held upon matters of general interest disconnected with party politics, and I have also been honored by being chosen a member of some of the most useful and respectable associations in the city.

First, the Mechanics Society of which I am a member and have served two years as Vice President and one as President. The objects of this society are altogether charitable. It was instituted to relieve the wants of old and unfortunate members, their widows and orphan children. They have a school for the education of poor children belonging to members and a library for apprentices to which I made a considerable donation of books.

Second, the Tammany Society, a (or) Columbia Order, the object of which is partly political and partly charitable. In this institution I served several years as their Treasurer, took an active part in the erection of Tammany Hall and acted one year as their President. The political objects were to inculcate the principles of liberty and the rights of man, and the charitable objects were to assist unfortunate members.

Third, the Mechanic and Scientific Institution of which I was for several years the President. The objects were to encourage the mechanic arts by an annual fair and the granting of premiums for the most perfect and ingenious productions, and also by lectures on the arts and sciences. This institution however finally fell into the hands of the manufacturers of cotton and woolen cloths, and is now used by them under the appellation of the American Institute to increase the duty on importation and by a high tariff, which will give the monopoly of that branch of business, to oppress the people and by that means enrich themselves. On being satisfied that this was the object of those who led in these matters, I resigned the office I held as their President.

Fourth, the Public School Society, formerly the Free School Society, of which for a number of years I have been a Trustee. The objects of this society are to teach the children of the poor gratuitously and disseminate the principles of religion and virtue among this important portion of our population. A very useful and highly necessary institution.

Fifth, the High School Society, of which I have been a Manager and Trustee from the time of its incorporation. The objects to be obtained were by adopting the Monitorial System of teaching, to lessen the expense more than one half.

Sixth, the New York Hospital and Lunatic Asylum, of which I have been a Governor for many years. This

institution may be termed charitable, as no person is refused admittance to the hospital who is really poor and therefore a proper subject. In the asylum the payment of a moderate price for Board is required from the poor, and for those whose circumstances will permit a higher rate of compensation is required.

Seventh, the House of Refuge for Juvenile Offenders, of which I am a Manager, was one of the Vice Presidents, and am now the President and have been for several years. The object of this institution is the reformation of children convicted of petty thefts and vagrancy. - - - -

Eighth, the American Bible Society, of which I am a life member. The object of this institution is the dissemination of the Scriptures among all classes of our population and at a cheap rate.

Ninth, the New York Eye Infirmary, of which I was elected a Governor but have not been able, owing to previous engagements, to give the institution any of my attention.

Tenth, the Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. This I have considered a very important and interesting institution and have been one of its Directors almost from the commencement. - - - -

Eleventh, the New York Tract Society, of which I am a life member. The object is to distribute short tracts upon religious and moral subjects among the poor and also to draw the attention of others to the propriety of temperance and moderation.

Twelfth, the American Prison Discipline Society, of which I am also a life member. The object is to improve the discipline in our prisons and to inculcate sound maxims upon penal jurisprudence.

Thirteenth, the Mechanics Bank of the City of New York, of which institute I was a Director from 1810, the date

of its charter, until 1826, when I was called to the Tradesmen's Bank.

Fourteenth, the Tradesmen's Bank of the City of New York. This bank was chartered in 1825 and in the brief space of between two and three years, there were depredations committed upon its capital by an unprincipled set of fellows, who had got into its management, to the amount of \$120,000. Just before matters had come to a crisis, some of the stockholders who mistrusted what was going on, obtained an injunction upon their proceedings. I was applied to with Peter Stagg, Esq., to act as receiver. I accepted the appointment and acted in that capacity until the institution was in a condition to resume payment of their notes. The directors and stockholders insisted on my acting as President of the bank and at their earnest solicitation I consented. The office was by no means desirable as it was not only a responsible one but caused much anxiety of mind in consequence of its position in public estimation and the fear that some false step might be taken that would ruin all that had been done to establish the credit of the institution. I succeeded however in fully reinstating the bank and establishing its credit firmly, and having done all that was expected of me I retired from the office on the 10th day of July, 1829.

Fifteenth, the Fulton Insurance Co. and the Firemen's Insurance Co., of both of which I have been a Director since their charter. They are both chartered for the purpose of insuring against loss and damage from fire.

I held none of these offices on my own solicitation but at the request of those in almost every instance who deemed my services useful or that the character I sustained in the community would add to the character and assist the objects of the institution. Not that I should have considered it improper to request a place in these

institutions with right motives, but I have before stated I always felt a repugnance to anything which had the slightest approach to seeking office or honor of any kind; and also because a place of honor or of trust and confidence conferred spontaneously was at all times more valuable in my view than one requested or sought after.

(November, 1829.)

On the 12th of April, 1824, the Legislature of this State appointed George Tibbitts of Troy, Samuel M. Hopkins of Albany and myself commissioners to visit the state prisons or penitentiaries; the one situated at Auburn in the County of Cayuga and the other in the City of New York; and to report to them on the government of said prisons &c., the efficacy of the punishment inflicted on the convicts, and to recommend such alterations in the discipline, government and punishment as we might deem useful and salutary. In performing this duty much time and reflection was employed and on the 15th of January, 1825, we presented a long and circumstantial report to the Legislature on the subjects referred to us. - - -

The result of our inquiries was a recommendation to the Legislature to purchase one of the marble quarries in the vicinity of New York, either at Kings Bridge about 12 miles from the City Hall or at Mount Pleasant, about 24 miles from the city; and to erect thereon a new State Prison instead of the inconvenient and awkwardly constructed building at Greenwich (Village) in the suburbs of the city.

- - - - In the April subsequent to our appointment we examined the several quarries as a site for a prison, and selected a farm at Mount Pleasant in the vicinity of the Village of Sing Sing, which contained an inexhaustible quarry of marble. This farm consists of about 130 acres and we

purchased it on behalf of the state for \$20,156. In June, 1825, we commenced the building. - - - -

On the first of November, 1825, I retired from business, believing it necessary to have my pecuniary matters settled and in hope that I should then be at leisure to cultivate my mind by reading and reflection; but in this I was in a measure disappointed, for scarcely a week had elapsed before I was called on by my fellow citizens to serve them in the Legislature of the State and I was accordingly elected to the Assembly at the ensuing election and served in that body from January to May, 1826. In the fall of that year I was solicited to stand as a candidate for the Senate to which I consented, but from some cause or other I lost my election. - - - - There was good reason to believe that - - - - the election went against me, more from the circumstance that my opponent was run on the same ticket with Governor Clinton who was the successful candidate, than from any loss of confidence on the part of the public. - - - -

Previous to the annual election of 1827, I was strongly solicited to stand as a candidate, first as Senator, and on my declining that, second, as a Member of Assembly. But I had made up my mind, as I told my friends, not to run the risque of another defeat through their inattention, and therefore positively declined the profer they had made me. Again in 1828 it was insisted on that I should allow the use of my name for the Senate, which I finally concluded to do and was elected by a majority of more than 5000 over my opponent. I took my seat in the Senate of the State of New York on the first Tuesday of January, 1829, and went through an arduous session of four months and five days, during the whole of which time I was present in the house at the hours of business, except an absence of three days on the opening of the river in the spring, when I took the opportunity of visiting the family at home. - - - -

The most important question before the Legislature during the session of 1829 was the renewal of the bank charters. A number of them having only a year or two to run, they were petitioning for a renewal. I was appointed Chairman of the Bank Committee with Messrs. Benton from Herkimer and Oliver from Yates as my colleagues. Governor Van Buren had called the attention of the Legislature in his message to a new project in the system of banking. The substance of it was that all the banks whole charter should be renewed, and all the new banks chartered should form a kind of copartnership by paying annually the half of one percent on their capital as a fund to sustain each other in the event of a failure - by which the careful and provident were to be made answerable for the carelessness, inexperience or fraudulence of the others. - - - -

(December, 1829)

The increase of taxes and the large expenditure of the Corporation of the city upon projects of doubtful utility, had called the attention of the public to the subject, and measures were adopted for calling a convention to amend the charter. In May, 1829, an election was held in the several wards for the choice of delegates and I was returned by the Tenth Ward as one of their representatives. At the second meeting of the convention on the 26th of June, I proposed a set of resolutions detailing my views of the amendments required under existing circumstances, which were referred to the committee of one from each ward. I had previously made the draft of an Act to be passed by the Legislature, to which I subjoined a plan for organizing the Executive Department of the city government, and which was called for by a member of the committee, and on motion was referred, together with the resolution referred to, to the

Committee of Fourteen, being one from each ward. The committee reported substantially my draft.

Whether the Legislature will pass it into a law is yet to be seen. - - - -

On the 14th of September, 1829, I sat for the first time as a Judge of the Court of Errors, which office is assigned to the senators by the constitution of the state.

The court was convened in the City of New York and they sat 45 days and during that time heard twenty causes argued from a calendar of thirty-nine. - - - - This was a duty entirely new and I have found it uncommonly arduous. I had everything to learn, and I have accordingly been compelled to study hard. The technical terms employed by the lawyers throw a cloud of obscurity over the sense and understanding of the subject; but with the help of a law dictionary I have been enabled to comprehend most of them sufficiently at least to give a common sense opinion on the merits of the case to be decided. I heard all the causes, except one, and of the nineteen causes I heard argued I wrote my opinion on sixteen of them, which I shall read in my place at the sitting of the court on the 19th proximo.

It is provided for by statute that annually there shall be appointed a committee, by joint resolution of both houses of the Legislature, consisting of not less than one member of the Senate and two of the Assembly to examine the Treasurer's accounts. On a ballot having been entered into by the Senate for a member of this committee, the result was that I was selected for that office. Mr. Johnson from Oneida and Mr. Maner from Herkimer, members of the Assembly, were my colleagues. We met at Albany for the performance of the duty enjoined on the 14th of December, 1829, and commenced the examination of the vouchers in the Treasurer's Department, and on the 9th of January, 1830, we made our report to the Legislature in detail. The Court of Errors met on the 19th

December and continued in session until the 1st day of January. While the court was in session, I could only give a partial attention to the duties of the committee, and therefore was compelled to acquiesce in a portion of the examination made by my colleagues during my absence.

The causes argued in September were decided at this session of the Court of Errors. I read in my place the opinions I had prepared and although I was left in the minority on a few of the questions, the opinions appeared to have been well received and in some instances were spoken of with approbation, even by the lawyers. The thing was much more novel than I had any idea of; for from the information given me on the subject, it appears there are no instances on record where a layman has attempted to give an opinion in the Court of Errors before. This has usually been left to the Judges and Chancellor, and on some particular occasions perhaps you may have an opinion from the lawyers who are members of the Senate, the lay members contenting themselves with voting yes or no, as their judgment or the influence of the opinions delivered by others dictate. -

The reporter, Mr. Wendell, attempted to flatter me when speaking of my opinions, and said he would not fail to notice in his next volume the fact that these opinions were delivered by a person making no pretensions to knowledge of the law and in truth that the author was no other than a mechanic. I perceive that notwithstanding these fine speeches, several of the opinions have been omitted in his last volume;- whether for the want of room, their imperfections, or to gratify lawyers, who of course are his best customers, I know not, neither do I care, as my ambition never soared so high as to wish any writings of mine to appear in print, unless with the full and entire approbation of the editors of the work, to whom the manuscript was offered.

[If ever an independent judge sat, Mr. Allen was the man. His opinions were fearless of the Statute Law and are well worth reading. They are to be found in 3 Wendell, 528, 557, 604, 624, 665, in 4 Wendell, 25, 42, 55, 69, 88, in 5 Wendell, 329, 349, 398, 408, 420, 452, in 7 Wendell, 545, 595, in 8 Wendell, 65, 117, 141, 153, 169, 260, 287, 349, in 9 Wendell, 524, 544, 657, and in 10 Wendell, 14.]

At this time William H. Seward was a State Senator, also sitting in the Court of Errors. It will be seen later that Mr. Allen cordially dislikes and distrusts Mr. Seward. Possibly Seward, the lawyer, made no attempt to veil his contempt for a lay member of the Court who dared to express his views. Mr. Seward was somewhat arrogant, as will be recalled by those who are familiar with his history until 1861, when Mr. Lincoln took him in hand.]

(November, 1830)

A session of the Court of Errors was held in the City of New York commencing on the 23rd day of August and ending on the 14th of October, 1830. - - - - The calendar of this Court was uncommonly large, consisting of fifteen appeals from the Court of Chancery and seventeen from the Supreme Court. Every case ready for argument was heard viz. thirteen of the former and sixteen of the latter, together twenty-nine cases. I took minutes as usual in nearly all of these cases, but have been unable, in consequence of debilitated health to write opinions on any of them. - - - -

The application that I have been compelled to give to matters of a public nature has prevented me from bestowing my accustomed attention to the duties incumbent upon me as a member of other institutions, and I therefore resigned as a Director of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, also as a

Trustee of the High School Society, and as a Governor of the New York Hospital, and shall probably have to resign other places of similar character, as I have never held any station whatever for the mere honor of it; whenever I find that I am unable to perform the duties incumbent upon me, I shall as heretofore resign in order that the place may be supplied by persons of more leisure, if not of better capacity.

I found my health so much impaired during the session of the Court of Errors in August last, that it was with some difficulty that I was enabled to give the necessary attention to the business before it. I had been for some years occasionally troubled with slight attacks of vertigo or dizziness in the head but on the first day of the session of the court while walking in the street I experienced a considerable shock, which induced me to return home immediately. Bleeding in the arm was resorted to without much benefit and then cupping or drawing blood from the temples was tried, with no better success. For several weeks I took no sustenance but bread and milk and then again changed my diet to beef and mutton with bread made of the coarsest flour. The cause of the disorder was said to be in the stomach and considered a species of dispepsia and I therefore tried a number of the remedies prescribed for that disease.

Finally riding on horse back was recommended, but as I was entirely unaccustomed to that kind of exercise, having never been on a horse more than two or three times in my life, I had strong doubts whether I ought to make the attempt or not. I however determined on trying my hand at it and accordingly ordered a horse from a livery stable, and with some awkwardness got on his back and set off with a mind to succeed if possible, but my confidence soon forsook me and I was compelled to return after riding a short distance. My next plan was to take lessons at a riding school, and here I

succeeded beyond my own expectations, for after taking 16 or 18 lessons on a circus prepared for the purpose, I was enabled to go on the road and am now a tolerable rider. - - -

(June, 1831)

Neither exercise nor diet gave me entire relief from the disagreeable sensation felt in my head, and I concluded that a residence in the country during the hot months of the year might be beneficial. I accordingly began to look about for a proper situation and after examining several places offered for sale, we finally decided on one in the village of Flushing, on Long Island. - - - - It contained about six and one-half acres of good land - - - - Carriage ways are laid down with gravel on both sides of the premises, leading around the house, and a foot path paved with bricks leads from the center of the ground in front to flights of steps which ascend to the porch and front entrance to the house. The north, south and east sides of the house are shaded by a number of fruit and forest trees but the west or front of the house was entirely exposed to the sun for more than half the day. This I have endeavored to remedy by planting a row of willows of large growth near the house, which in the course of two or three years it is thought will be sufficient shade and protection to that part of the premises. - - - - The house is sufficiently commodious for the summer residence of a pretty large family, but would be rather small for a permanent abode throughout the year, and my present calculation is, should we hereafter conclude to remove to the place for good, to make additions to the house by adding wings to the north and south end of it, containing a room proper for my library, together with additional ones for lodgings, &c.

I found my health somewhat improved in the fall of the year and concluded therefore to attend in my place at the Court of Errors, which was to meet at Albany on the second Saturday in December. - - - - The 54th Session of the Legislature of this State commenced on the 5th day of January, 1831, and I scarcely had time after the adjournment of the court to return home for a day or two previous to the meeting of the Legislature. The most important transactions of this session, so far at least as they partook of a general interest, were the passage of an Act abolishing imprisonment for debt, and the renewal of the charters of the New York banks.

The act compelling every bank newly chartered, or after the renewal of its charter, to pay into the Treasury of the State a fund to be applied to the liquidation of the debts of any associate institution that might become insolvent, had become so popular in the country that it was found impracticable to obtain any modification of the law in favor of New York. - - - -

(July, 1831)

I am writing at our country place at Flushing, which I attempted to describe to you in my last. As yet we have no fault to find with our situation. We have good water, salubrious air and a garden producing abundance of the best of vegetables. My health I think is improving, and I employ my (123)time in riding to the city once or twice a week and occasionally about the country and, when required, in doing small jobs about the place, and in the garden, and still have leisure for reading and study. The occurrences are too uniform and commonplace to afford material for a letter and I am tempted therefore more for the purpose of employing my spare time than from an expectation of communicating anything

worthy of your notice, to give you a brief account of one or two of our journeys or summer excursions to Saratoga Springs, Niagara Falls, &c. There are perhaps few men who have arrived at my age, that have traveled less and the reasons are obvious. Before I had the means I was unable to afford the expense and loss of time, and when I had the means, my time was not my own, at least my spare time, as I had then given it up to the public. I never permitted my recreations and pleasure to interfere with business as you well know, and when business was out of the way my public engagements demanded of me as diligent attention as did my private business when I followed it. It was not therefore until the year 1828 that I thought myself so far relieved from the calls of public and private concerns as to authorize a visit to the resort of all that is fashionable or more properly those who wish to be considered so, - Saratoga Springs.

We left New York in the steamboat North America on Tuesday morning the 12th August, 1828, at 7 o'clock and arrived at Albany at a quarter past 7 of the evening of the same day. Nothing occurred on the passage worth noting. The day was fair and the scenery of the Hudson displayed itself to great advantage. The passengers on board the boat numbered about 300, and still there was abundance of room. The only inconvenience experienced was at our meals, the tables being insufficient to accommodate the whole number at the same time. We put up at the Eagle Tavern, and after tea went out to view the town by star-light. In passing the museum the music arrested our attention and we concluded to walk in and see what there was to be exhibited. - - - - We had not been long in the museum when we were quite unexpectedly invited to another room, which was arranged for theatrical exhibitions, and on inquiring what was to be seen there, we were told that learned dogs were to be exhibited. In a short time a person appeared before the audience and

informed them that he was about exhibiting two of the most wonderful animals ever seen, that they had been the admiration of all Europe, and wherever exhibited in America the most intense admiration and wonder had been excited, and much more to the same effect. One of the dogs then produced by the name of Toby. There was nothing in the exterior appearance of the animal to invite admiration, being of middling size, thin in flesh and in every respect a mean looking dog. His master commenced by laying a number of cards on the floor in a circular form and then informed us that the dog would tell the hour of the evening. A watch was borrowed from one of the company, which showed the time to be 46 minutes past 8. This was shown the dog and he was bid to proceed. He then commenced marching around the circle and finally selected a card on which was the figure 8; he again started after marching several times around the circle, he brought another card on which was the figure 4, and again one with the figure 6, making the time 8 o'clock and 46 minutes, which agreed with the time by the watch. Several other questions were proposed, such as the number of miles around the earth, the distance of our globe from the planet Venus, Mars, the Moon &c., all of which were correctly answered by the dog Toby. How it was practicable to teach this dumb animal to select these cards, with much precision is mysterious and beyond my conception. He appeared to pay no attention to his master after he had received the word to search, and there could not therefore (have) been communicated to him any instructions by signs or otherwise as a guide to his movements or we should have noticed it. - - -

- There was another dog exhibited, who performed several feats of agility, such as jumping through hoops, walking on his hind legs, &c. He however was an ignorant dog when compared with his more enlightened and scientific brother. - - -

(December, 1831)

The next morning, Wednesday the 13th of August, we took breakfast at 8 o'clock and at 9 took the stage for Saratoga Springs, where we arrived at half past 4 P.M. The distance from Albany to Saratoga is 34 miles, over a road which is usually pretty good, but owing it was said to the continued rains, which not only injured the road but prevented the workmen from repairing it, at the time we traveled it, it was indifferent enough. Thursday morning we commenced drinking the water of the Congress Spring and took five tumblers as an experiment. In the afternoon we visited High Rock Spring. - - - - I spent the remainder of this day in reading Miller's journal of his mission to Greece, an interesting narrative to those who have a heart to feel for the sufferings and privations of a people who were struggling to free themselves from the bondage of the cruel and brutal Turk.

In the evening we attended a concert of vocal music by Mr. and Mrs. Pearman. The singing according to my taste was indifferent, not but that the voices of the singers were good and accorded perhaps with the science of the profession, but to my ear it was all sound. I allude to the imperfect pronunciation of the words, as scarcely a syllable could be understood by the audience. This is a fault too common with all singers that have come under my observation, whether at private parties or in public. From this general censure however I except the Signorina Garcia and Mr. Philips, both of whom not only delight their hearers by the silver tones of their voices but instruct them by permitting their audience to hear and understand what they sing. - - - -

There was a hop at the Pavillion too on the same evening. - - - - It may be proper here to explain what is meant by the term "hop". There are three principal hotels at

Saratoga, which jointly employ a small band of musicians to perform alternately at each establishment. There is therefore a ball and a hop at each house once a week. On Monday evening there is a ball at the United States Hotel, on Tuesday a hop at Congress Hall, on Wednesday a ball at the Pavillion, on Thursday a hop at the United States Hotel, on Friday a ball at Congress Hall, on Saturday a hop at the Pavillion. The difference between a ball and a hop is this: the ball is got up by subscription, a list being sent around to each house and the expense of refreshments, &c. is paid by the subscribers in equal proportions. The hop is considered a family dance and is principally confined to the boarders in the house, although others attend when invited, in order, if the boarders are few, the company may be increased and the hilarity of the occasion augmented.

Friday, August 15th, we rode to Saratoga Lake, about six miles from the Springs. This is a handsome sheet of water and the scenery about it is very fine. We were taken in a boat to the fishing ground, and furnished with the necessary implements for the business, such as poles, hook and line, and boat for fishing. Mrs. Allen caught one of the lake fish, which was the first she ever caught, but for myself I have not the patience necessary for an angler and accordingly looked on while others continued the sport.

In the evening we returned to our quarters at the Pavillion sufficiently fatigued for an early bed, but from some cause or other I found myself quite unwell, and in the night was attacked with a severe turn of cholera, which left me during the next day so much debilitated that I found it advisable to keep [to] my room and avoid all unnecessary exertion.

Sunday, August 17th, attended church in the forenoon at the Presbyterian Meeting House, where an excellent discourse was pronounced by Doctor Spring of New York. In

the afternoon I went to the Baptist Meeting House, where the services were performed by Episcopalian ministers, there being no church at that time in the village belonging to that denomination of Christians. The sermon was a very fair one and the time was well and agreeably spent by those who heard it. - - - -

(December, 1831)

The Boarders at the Pavillion were invited on Monday the 18th of August to hear the preaching of a female belonging to the Society of Friends. We accordingly attended the meeting. There was some good counsel given, but nothing new or original. The speaker appeared sincere and pious, and delivered her discourse in a solemn and serious tone, but it was evident from the impatience manifested, that she was unable to make any impression upon her audience, and there were some even who left the church before the close of the meeting. - - - - On the evening of Thursday, the 19th, we attended a concert of vocal and instrumental music given by Mrs. Austin and Mr. Horn, of the Park Theatre, New York. There were about 150 persons present, all or nearly all of the first distinction, owing in a measure to the performance being held at Congress Hall, the most fashionable hotel at this time. Mr. Horn is an excellent singer, has a fine voice and his enunciation so perfectly distinct that we could understand every word he sang as well as though he were reading. Mrs. Austin is also a good vocal performer, but by no means to be compared to Signorina Garcia. -

We rode to Balston Springs on Wednesday, in company with Messrs. Swords and Kipp and their wives. We saw several of our acquaintances at that place, among others Mr.

P. ____ S ____ a man of large property but who has the

character of being penurious, and it surprised as much therefore that he should be met at so expensive an establishment as the Sans Souci Hotel. It is due to this gentleman, however, to say that I have no personal knowledge of (the truth of) these reports and therefore place no confidence in them. - - - -

I had another attack of indisposition on Thursday which induced me to apply to Doctor Steel for advice. He gave me a calomel pill to be taken on going to bed and advised that in the first glass of water in the morning I should mix a small quantity of Epsom Salts. This had the desired affect and relieved me of all unpleasant feeling thereafter. - - - -

(December, 1831)

We went to church on Sunday the 24th August, 1828, both morning and evening. - - - - On Monday morning Mr. and Mrs. Swords, who had been our companions for several days, left the Springs on their return to New York. There appeared in fact a general movement among the visitors, and we found the dinner table on that day deserted by many who had graced it with their presence for several days previous. Among the new comers to the Springs, were the learned dogs Toby and Minette that we had seen at Albany, and who their keeper was about to exhibit for the gratification of the water-drinkers and the interest of himself. After five or six days of excessive hot weather, during which the thermometer had ranged from 85 to 86 degrees, we had on Tuesday the 26th a change to a cool and bracing atmosphere. An additional number of our Boarders left us, some for home and some for a trip to Lake George and the Canadas, which almost depopulated the Pavillion and induced us to think of moving also.

An invitation was posted at the door of our hotel to the visitors to attend church in the evening, when a sermon would be preached by a Catholic clergyman. I attended and on my return home endeavored to recollect the substance of his discourse, the object of which was a defense of the doctrines and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church.

(December, 1831)

My last was rather longer than usual, having concluded to give you in one letter the whole of the minutes I made of the sermon of the Catholic priest. The principles in which we have been educated, as well as the conviction of our riper ears, will not permit us to accord full evidence to the doctrines of the Church of Rome; but while we may disagree with them both in faith and practice, we must at the same time admit that under our free government they have the same rights to their opinions that we have to ours; and although the fact is that a great portion of the Catholic congregation in this country is composed of ignorant foreigners, upon whose senses no other form of worship would operate with half the force of the show and ceremony of the adherents of this faith, whose literary acquirements, practical piety and respectable character entitled them to our respect and esteem. It is not the profession of a particular creed therefore, that entitles a man to the appellation of Christian, but the practice of all those moral duties, enjoined on us by the author of our religion, of which charity is the greatest and which we are told will cover a multitude of sins. But to proceed with my narrative.

We left Saratoga on Thursday the 28th of August at 9 o'clock in the morning for Schnectady where we arrived at 1/2 past 12. Here we took dinner and at 2 o'clock went on Board

the canal boat bound for Utica. There is a safety and comfort in these boats not to be found on Board the steamers, particularly for such as are invalids. No perceptible motion is observed in their movement more than would be felt on shore if seated in a chair, except when passing through the locks, and this is effected in a few moments. The berths are contracted owing to the narrowness of the boar, made necessary in order to pass through the locks. Every possible advantage is taken of this space, and the economy of room observed in the whole construction is remarkable.

The apparatus for cooking and other culinary purposes does not occupy more room than a space 6 feet by 8 and in this apartment with nothing but a common cooking stove excellent meals are prepared for a company of forty or fifty persons and served up in as good order and style as may be found on Board any of the Hudson River steamboats. We arrived at Utica on the 29th about 3 o'clock P.M. and took quarters at Shepard's Hotel, formerly Baggs.

The Village of Utica is situated on a navigable part of the Mohawk River and was selected as a place of trade some years before the construction of the Erie Canal. It was, when I first visited it in 1814, a mere hamlet composed of a few houses and stores, but it is now a populous city, rapidly increasing in wealth and magnitude. Forty years since the forest covered the ground where now stand elegant edifices, neat and stately dwellings, regular paved streets, and lofty temples for the worship of the Deity. On the 30th we engaged a carriage to take me to Trenton Falls, distant about 16 miles from Utica, and two miles from the Village of Trenton, Oneida County. - - - -

[The travelers cut their western trip short at this point upon hearing that there was an unusual amount of sickness in and around Niagara Falls, and decided to return to New York City by the way of Boston.

From Utica they staged to Albany, then to Lebanon Springs, where they attended services in the Meeting House and witnessed the gyrations of the Shakers, which failed to make a favorable impression on Mr. Allen.

Thence by stage to Pittsfield and to Northampton.]

(December, 1831)

- - - - The population (Northampton) is about 2500. About four miles from Northampton is situated the famous woolen factory belonging to Mr. Shepard, whose cloths are highly esteemed and in the market are called by the name of the manufacturer. We were informed that this gentleman had accumulated a large fortune from the profits of his establishment under the old tariff, had sold out and retired from business. If this is true, of which I have no doubt, with what truth is it said that the manufacturers are sinking their capital under the protection given them by the tariff of 1828? And with what propriety are we, in the City of New York, compelled to pay a tax of fifty to one hundred percent on imported goods for the benefit of manufacturers who before this burthen was laid upon us were accumulating large fortunes from their business?

We took an early breakfast at Northampton on Wednesday morning, September 10th, and then proceeded on our way to Boston. The first place where the stage stopped was the manufacturing village of Ware. Time was not allowed to view the factories but they appeared very extensive and in full operation. We were informed by Mr. Barnard, our fellow traveler, who had frequently been through this part of the country, that five years ago the ground now occupied by this village was a wilderness. It contains about 1800 inhabitants, principally employed in the factories. Ware is

another proof that under the tariff of 1824, the manufacturers were increasing in wealth, and that the Act of 1828, augmenting the duties fifty to one hundred percent was a measure both partial and unjust, stripping one portion of the community of their money, in order that another portion might be enriched by it. While we tarried at this village the dinner bells of the factories were rung, and we had a view of the operatives, issuing from the doors of the several buildings. A large portion were females and children of both sexes. On our road to Worcester where we expected to lodge, we passed two manufacturing establishments, at one of which we observed a number of children who at first sight we took for negroes so completely changed was their complexion by work in the dye house, in which they had been engaged. Arriving at the village of Brookfield, the stage stopped for the purpose of refreshing the horses, and while that was being effected, I walked into the bar-room, where I observed a printed hand-bill posted on the wall and containing the following words:-

"TWENTY YOUNG GIRLS WANTED."

The Western Manufacturing Company is in want of twenty young girls, to whom steady employment will be given. &c.,&c.

The caption of this hand-bill was presented in staring capitals and must I should presume have made others as well as ourselves stare on the first view of it, and wonder as we did, in the name of common decency who it could be that wanted twenty young girls. These things however are familiar to the proprietors of manufacturing establishments and therefore advertisements, such as the above may be seen and read without shocking the sensibility of those whose whole object is money, although the means used to obtain it may demoralize a whole community; but to such as have seen or heard of the evils which result in other countries from this

business, and fearing the same to our happy and prosperous Republic, it cannot be viewed with indifference. No one can doubt, I think, that the placing together in one building such a number of both sexes, must have an injurious effect both on the habits and constitutions of the subjects. One of the evils experienced in the old manufacturing towns of Great Britain is the number of seductions to which the practice leads, and the only remedy adopted is to encourage early marriages. There is however a more powerful reason for this encouragement, viz; a means by which the annual loss by disease and death is made good, and therefore when the parents by the effects of a confined and unwholesome atmosphere are disabled by disease, and no longer able to labor, their children are prepared to take their places. These are some of the effects of manufacturing establishments in Europe, and there is little reason to doubt that they will be the same in this country. - - -

(December, 1831)

The same evening of our arrival at Boston we visited the Tremont Theatre, where the Lady of the Lake was performed to a thin house. The building has a handsome front of white granite and its dimensions are about the same as those of the Chatham Theatre of New York. The finish of the interior is quite plain, - there are three tiers of boxes, each box calculated to hold twelve persons, three on each seat, while other theatres hold five on each seat. - - -

Having viewed all worth seeing - - - we proceeded to Breed's or Bunker's Hill in order to see the monument erected there. On this hill the first regular stand was made against the British at the commencement of our Revolutionary War, and the monument alluded to is being erected for the

purpose of perpetuating the memory of the bravery and patriotism of our countrymen who there made a hold and successful stand against the tyranny of the British government. - - - - In the afternoon we visited the State House, conspicuously situated on the highest ground in the city. The building is a plain brick structure painted white and has nothing to recommend it on the score of architecture. We ascended one hundred and sixty steps to the cupola, from which there is a splendid view of the city and the villages of Charleston, Cambridge, Brookline and Roxbury, including the bay which encompasses Boston (except the small neck of land which joins it to the main land), the numerous islands in the vicinity, and the boundless ocean which extends beyond the vision of the human eye. On the first floor of the State House enclosed by an iron railing stands a marble statute of Washington. It is the work of Chantry, an artist of great skill. My recollections of the features of George Washington are perhaps imperfect but while looking at this representation it seemed to me to be an exact likeness of him, both in feature and form. - - - -

Having heard much of the resort of the Bostonians in the heat of summer, Nahant, we took passage on Saturday the 13th of September, in the steamboat which plies between that place and the city, and arrived there at 11 o'clock A.M. Nahant is situated on a peninsula open to (the) sea, the shores of which are defended from the action of the water by immense piles of slate rock. The views from these ledges are very fine. To the east lies the ocean, to the south the numerous islands forming the harbor of Boston; on the north may be seen the towns of Lynn, Marblehead and Salem, and to the west the main land with hill and dale extending beyond the vision.

These several views are very romantic and exceed in my opinion any of the views bordering on the ocean in the

vicinity of New York. We did not see the "Sea Serpent", about which so much has been said in the newspapers, but while we were standing upon one of the points of projecting rock, we beheld a sight which half a century ago would have caused more wonder and astonishment than the appearance of fifty sea serpents. This was the steamer Benjamin Franklin, filled with passengers on a party of pleasure. This boat was built in the City of new York and had arrived at Boston, the day before we had; as she was the largest vessel of the kind ever seen in these waters, much curiosity was excited among the Bostonians. There was scarcely a man, woman or child that did not go to the wharf to see her. We were told that the press was so great that the captain was compelled to haul off into the stream, in order to prevent obstructions and injury to the vessel. She passed us in fine style, with her two engines in full operation, her colors flying and an excellent band of music playing favorite airs. - -

(January, 1832)

We left Boston on the 15th at noon by stage for Providence, Rhode Island, and arrived at that city at 8 o'clock the same evening. - - - Providence is a city of some importance and well situated for commercial operations, possessing a good harbor with depth of water sufficient for vessels of the largest class. We were informed that the population was about 22,000 and that it had doubled in eighteen years. The immense water power possessed by this small state induced the erection of several cotton and one or two woolen factories, and the increase of their business caused by the late war with Great Britain, and the continuation of high duties by the tariff of 1816 and 1824, had brought them to great perfection, and caused a ready demand and a good market for the articles they produced.

This encouragement together with the foreign commerce carried on by the merchants of the place, has been the means of making Providence what it is. The flourishing condition of the place at the time we visited it is sufficient proof that further protection to manufacturers was not called for. Surely when a people prosper and increase in wealth and numbers, they cannot be in want of assistance; but there is no bound to the cupidity of man, and these manufacturers, as had been shown by their influence on the national councils, rather than lose a few cents profit per yard on their cloth would see the Union dissolved, provided the states east and north of the Potomac would hold together and continue the restrictions on the introduction of foreign fabrics, by which means their wealth would be insured and their influence maintained in the councils of the nation. Everything I saw or heard relating to this subject has only tended to prove the absurdity of the tariff of 1828 and it remains to be seen whether the operations of this measure of increased taxation on the people, tending to paralyze the commerce of our country, will be born by the nation or not.

We took a walk through some of the principle streets of the place and among other improvements examined a large building erected upon the plan of an arcade. It is a splendid structure, seventy two feet in width and two hundred and twenty two feet in length. - - - - The passage through the center leading from one street to the other is about 25 feet in width and the rooms intended as stores or shops are of a very comfortable size, much more so than those in the Arcade, since removed, erected between John Street and Maiden Lane, New York. There is no indication of poverty when so expensive a building as the one alluded to can be erected and supported, much of the cost of which is for more show without one particle of utility. Now if the ability to pay for embellishments, such as referred to, is derived from

commerce, why injure the source by excluding through the means of heavy duties the articles of commerce? And if it is derived from the profits of manufactures, why add to those profits which have already accumulated wealth under the old tariff, in such abundance? - - - -

[Their steamer left Providence on September 17th at 7 A.M. They had been absent from home five weeks and two days.]

- - - - During the session of 1831, the Court of Errors resolved to hold their next meeting at Albany on the 22nd of August of the same year for the purpose of hearing the causes argued that were on the Calendar. These causes were decided at a session commencing on the 1st of December, 1831, and ending with the year. I wrote and delivered opinions on fifteen out of nineteen causes, twelve of which were published in Wendell's reports. The 55th session of the Legislature commenced on the 3rd of January, 1832, and continued until the 26th of April following. There was no business of importance transacted at this session. We incorporated thirty companies, not one of which has gone into operation; also seven banks, the capital stock of the whole of them having been sought for and taken up with avidity. They have all gone into operation and are issuing their paper to the utmost of their ability. This session was continued several days beyond the ordinary time under an expectation that Congress would pass the bill apportioning the representation of each state in the House of Representatives of the United states in accordance with the census of 1830; but this Act not having been received before the adjournment of the Legislature, it was understood that if Congress passed the bill alluded to an extra session would be called by the Executive during the ensuing summer. The Governor accordingly called the Legislature together on the 21st June, 1832, and laid before them the Act apportioning the

representatives in Congress for the several states, which gave the State of New York four members more than given by the census of 1820.

Early in the month of June, the Asiatic cholera broke out in Canada, said to have been brought there by emigrants from England. Montreal, the place where it first made its appearance, being so near to us and much intercourses occurring between the inhabitants of the places, caused great fear that the disease would be introduced among us unless measures were adapted to prevent. The Legislature being in session, they were called upon to adopt such prudential acts as in their judgment might appear necessary to prevent the spread of the disease and to mitigate the sufferings of those who might be exposed to its attacks. They accordingly passed an Act for the preservation of the public health which directed Boards of health to be formed in all such towns as were not provided with them, and placed in their hands strong powers of coercion to prevent, if practicable, the introduction of the disease in any part of the state.

I was appointed Chairman of the Committee that reported this bill which passed both houses in a few days after it was reported. It may be proper to state here that the bill was not the work of my own mind. Shortly after the Committee was appointed, Benj. P. Butler, Esq. of Albany handed me the rough draft of a bill which had been prepared by him for the purpose and which the Committee adopted with some amendments, which was the bill that finally passed. We also passed a bill to divide the state into Congressional Districts, which gave to the City of New York four members of the House of Representatives instead of three as formerly. The passage of these acts was the only business of moment transacted at the session, and the members being anxious to be with their families in the event of the cholera reaching their neighborhood, caused an earlier adjournment of the

Legislature than would have been deemed proper, under other circumstances. They accordingly adjourned on the 2nd of July after a session of only seven days.

At a meeting of the Court of Errors in December, 1831, already alluded to, it was resolved to hold the next session at the City Hall in the City of New York on the 20th of August, 1832. The cholera however had made its appearance in the City of New York early in July and was still raging there in August; it was doubtful therefore, whether a meeting of the court could be had in that city, and measures were taken to urge on such of the members as could reach the city with convenience to be punctual in their attendance on the 1st day of the session in order that an adjournment might be made to some later day. A quorum appeared accordingly and without transacting any business whatever, the court was adjourned to the 10th of November, to meet at the Capitol at Albany. Among those present at the meeting was William Maynard, Esq. a Senator from the 5th District of the state and whose residence was at Utica. The cholera was very fatal at Utica when Mr. Maynard left home, as he informed me himself. He appeared to be in his usual health, but the next day he was down with the disease and although every attention was paid him, both by his physician and nurses, he sank under it and died in a few days after his attack. Whether he had contracted the disease at Utica or after his arrival in the city is unknown, the doctors disagreeing as usual as to the disease being contagious. - - - -

The court met on the 10th December, in accordance with the order of adjournment. Eight causes were adopted (sic), being all on the calendar, that were ready for trial. At the close of the argument the court took a recess of two weeks in order to afford time to the members to examine the cases and prepare their opinions. We met again on the 27th of December, 1832, and on that day decided four causes; on the

28th two causes, and on the 29th the remaining two causes. I read opinions on seven of these causes. The eighth was argued during my absence at New York, where I had gone for a day to celebrate the democratic victory obtained over our foes and those of the Federal and State administrations. The election was important in my view to the country at large, not only in point of principle but as securing the services of General Andrew Jackson for another term as President of the United States, particularly in the present unsettled state of the minds of our southern brethren. Having completed my public engagements at Albany as Senator, I started for home on Saturday afternoon the 29th of December, 1832, and arrived in New York on the 31st a private citizen.

(April, 1833)

I informed you in my last letter that my public duties had terminated and I had some reason to presume I should not again be called on, expecting to continue in the enviable position of a private citizen. I had scarcely reached home, however, before I was notified of an appointment by the Secretary of the United States Treasury, in conjunction with Preserved Fish, Esq. as Commissioners to examine and report to the department the best mode of providing for the relief of sick seamen at New York. - - - -

(May, 1833)

Having written a long and uninteresting epistle but a short time since, I feel a reluctance in troubling you again, when I have nothing to relate of the least interest to any but myself. But having commenced these records of my public transactions, or rather of public favors conferred upon me, I am induced to continue them in order that those of my family

who may succeed me may see in what light a man of integrity and uprightness is viewed by his fellow citizens, although in point of education and talents he may be very deficient.

In 1833 the Governor of this state nominated me to the Senate as one of the Water Commissioners of the City of New York under an act of the Legislature passed on the 26th of February previous, and the Senate confirmed the nomination. In a communication I made the Common Council in 1822, while I was Mayor of the City, and shortly after the termination of the yellow fever, with which the inhabitants had been afflicted from July to October of that year, I strongly recommended among other matters the supply of the city with good and wholesome water. A committee on that subject had been appointed in the May previous of which I was the Chairman. We examined the Bronx River, the Rye ponds, and other sources of supply in their vicinity, and I reported to the Common Council in April, 1823, and recommended an appropriation to defray the expense of a survey and profile of the route from the best source of supply to the city, which report was concurred in and the appropriation made. The survey was commenced by C. White one of the engineers on the Erie Canal, before I left the Common Council, or rather before I was removed or dismissed from the Mayoralty, but not completed until the year after. My connection with these preliminary steps was one of the causes, as I think, which induced my appointment as one of the Commissioners, and at their meeting for the first time after their appointment of their nominating me as Chairman. After the acceptance of this office, I had made up my mind to refuse every other call upon my time; but pressed with solicitations not easily disregarded I was induced to give up my name as a candidate for the office of Alderman.

The acts of the Common Council for several years, and particularly for the year 1832, had been so very extravagant

in the expenditure of the public money, and so partial, as it was generally deemed, in their measures, that it called down upon them the general reprobation of the tax paying portion of their fellow citizens. I was induced to write several articles for the Evening Post, over the signature of "A Mechanic", which I have reason to think had a tendency to open the eyes of the people on the subject of Corporation abuses, and which induced voters to come out in opposition to the leaders in the extravagance complained of. At the preparatory meeting of the Republicans of the Tenth Ward in which I reside, I was placed on the nominating committee for charter officers and at a meeting of the committee was put in nomination as one of the number from which a selection was to be made, but I declined being a candidate and had my name stricken from the list. After the committee had selected their candidate for Alderman, they chose for assistant (Alderman) the gentleman who then held the office, but he declined to accept giving as a reason that he had served the ward one year as assistant, and as he had been elected the year previous, and the candidate for Alderman on the same ticket had lost his election, he thought himself entitled to the office of Alderman in preference to the gentleman who had been so unsuccessful while running with him at the last election. Much pain was taken to change the determination of the Assistant Alderman by appointing a special committee to wait on him again and to endeavor to induce him to stand as candidate, but without effect as he positively refused serving the ward in any other capacity than as Alderman.

This refusal the Committee could only view as a species of false pride, as in point of usefulness a man might as well belong to one Board of the Common Council, as the other, both possessing the same powers by the charter, and the only difference being that the Alderman has the same power as a Justice of the Peace, which an Assistant Alderman

has not. In all legislative acts relative to the finances, improvements, or government of the city, the Alderman and Assistant Alderman are equal. If the gentleman alluded to was willing to serve in the Common Council at all, which it appears he was, it is strange that he should refuse when the difference to power or honor was so slight. The next gentleman selected declined serving also on account of having other business to attend to which would not permit him to devote any time to the duties of the office. The committee then, to my utter surprise, gave me an unanimous vote for the office, and would not hear of my refusing to serve or any remonstrance against the measure, although I reminded them of my declining to be a candidate for any office at the commencement of business, and also of the circumstances of my recently having been appointed as one of the Water Commissioners, which would occupy much of my time, together with the fact that my family resided out of the city about four months of the year, of the pleasure of which I would not be deprived on any account whatever, all of which circumstances, would prevent me from giving that attention to the duties of the office which was required. I was only answered that as a Democratic-Republican, I was bound to serve in any capacity required by the people and moreover that by permitting my name to be used it would harmonize the ward and defeat any attempts to distract the Democratic Party by the opposition. I was therefore compelled to submit, and the result was an almost unanimous election, to the office of Assistant Alderman of the Tenth Ward of the City of New York. Thus you see I am again placed in a situation something similar to the one I held when I first entered the Board in 1817, and, although I am in hopes of finding matters in a better condition than they were, it is not improbable that there will be enough of evil to correct to give full

employment to all the time and reflection I shall be able to devote to the subject.

(July, 1834)

It is now more than a year since I addressed you and a very busy year it has been for me. The necessary attention to the duties of Water Commissioner and a member of the Common Council of this city at the same time, has employed me almost exclusively; but having declined a reelection to the Common Council, I have some leisure on hand now which I have concluded to devote in detailing briefly some of the prominent measures in which I have an agency.

In the Common Council I found much careless and illegal legislation to correct. The provisions of the charter appeared to have no binding force on the members whatever, and the only consideration appeared to be whether the measure proposed was desirable and not whether it was lawful. - - - - A short time after taking my seat in the Board I requested the clerk to furnish me with a copy of the City Ordinances, but was informed that they had been out of print for nearly two years. At the next meeting of the Board I offered a joint resolution that a committee be appointed to consist of three members from each Board to revise the ordinances, with full power to employ the necessary aid. This resolution was adopted by both Boards and I was of course appointed chairman of the committee, it being customary to make the mover of the resolutions chairman. By great exertion and perseverance I was enabled to have the revision completed, and ordinances printed, and the sheets placed in the hands of the binder before I left the Board.

My duties as Water Commissioner were not neglected. Myself and colleagues spent several days on two separate occasions in viewing and exploring the many courses of water

in Westchester County. We engaged civil engineers to make the necessary surveys, estimates, &c. and we made a final report of our proceedings to the Common Council on the 12th of November, 1833. This report was prepared by me and was ordered printed by the Common Council, together with the profiles, maps &c. furnished by the engineers, to which reports I refer for a detail of facts and opinion on them. The Common Council appeared to think the expense of carrying into effect our plans was greater than it should be, and they therefore concluded to apply for an Act authorizing them to raise \$2,500,00. (instead of \$4,500,000, as proposed by our report) in the event of their concluding to supply the city with water from a distance and the citizens approving of it. The Act as passed by the Legislature authorized the appointment of Commissioners to report to the Common Council on or before January, 1836. If such reports shall be adopted, the subject is to be submitted to the ballot box; if approved by a majority of votes, the Common Council may proceed to borrow the money, which shall be expended in prosecuting the work under the supervision of the Commissioners. In pursuance of this act the Governor nominated, and with the consent of the Senate, appointed the same Commissioners viz; Allen, Brown, Alley, Fox, and Dusenbury. I called a meeting of these gentlemen shortly after their appointment, and submitted a paper I had prepared to be laid before the Common Council, stating the substance of the law, our appointment and readiness to act whenever they should deem it advisable by making the necessary appropriations to pay the engineers and other incidental expenses. The communication was referred to a committee who reported favorably but the report has not as yet been acted on. I am therefore out of public employ altogether and have no wish to embark in it unless it be as Water Commissioner, should the Common Council deem it proper that we proceed in the business. Being at leisure therefore, I may trouble you with the sketch of a journey I took some years since to the

great falls of Niagara; for I must be doing something, and it is better to be employed uselessly than injuriously.

(July, 1834)

I threatened you in my last with one of my dull stories, and am now about inflicting it upon you. I promise you however that it shall be as brief as possible and will convey no information worth recording and shall be perfectly free from wit and flowers of imagination. My apology for all this is that I write for want of other employment, that the road I travel is the public highway, and the objects I note are too well known and common to elicit information. I am not possessed of either wit or imagination and therefore am unable to communicate it to others. But to the point.

We left the city of New York on the morning of July 6th, 1830, in the barge Lady Clinton for Albany. The establishment of these barges was intended as a security from the dangers incident to the bursting of boilers of steamboats, and for this purpose they were securely fastened to the stern of the steamer at a distance of ten or twelve feet, - at the same time permitting a free passage from one to the other on strong planks, - and thus towed to the place of destination. This barge was fitted up very tastefully with a number of staterooms on deck for the use of those who were traveling with their families. The convenience, comfort and safety of these barges was much greater than that enjoyed on board the steamboats, still they did not succeed and the only reason of their want of success which can be offered is that it took them a few hours longer to make the trip than it did the other boats. They are now, and have been for some time past, abandoned as passage barges and turned into freight boats.

We arrived at Albany at five o'clock on the morning of Tuesday the 7th of July and shortly after took passage in the stage for Utica. The rapidity with which these stages travel gives but small opportunity for conversation or observation. We breakfasted at Schenectady, 15 miles from Albany, and were scarcely allowed time to swallow a cup of coffee before we were informed that the

stage was ready. Our next stage was to Palatine Bridge about 45 miles from Albany, where we took dinner. This part of the state was originally settled by emigrants from the Palatinate of Germany, an industrious and thriving people. We observed here an ancient stone church and an inquiry were informed that it was erected in 1770 at the expense of four of the descendants of the original German stock, who by the industry of their forefathers and the prudence and economy of themselves were able to erect this temple for religious worship, at their private charge. We did not arrive at Utica until twelve o'clock at night.

We left Utica on Friday July 9th at 2 o'clock P.M. in one of the canal packets. Here we found Dr. Valentine Mott and lady who it appeared were pursuing the same route with ourselves. We had met them on Board the boat from New York to Albany but as he made no inquiry as to the object of our journey neither did we as to his. They had come from Schenectady by canal, and we did not meet again until we left Utica. The doctor was at that time our family physician and had been so for many years, consequently we were well acquainted with him but not with his lady, and we soon found that anything like intimacy with her was out of the question. She appeared to have been spoiled by indulgence. She was full of whims, calling on the doctor for every trifling matter, and continually complaining of indisposition, or of want of assistance in effecting her wishes, which in some instances were void of either reason or utility.

We arrived at the village of Syracuse on Saturday the 10th of July at 4 o'clock A.M. The fare from Utica to this place, 142 miles including meals, was only \$2.43 for each person. We stopped at the principal hotel in the village, where we were furnished with a good breakfast for which our appetites had been prepared by early rising. After breakfast we had hired a carriage for a drive to Selina, where the great Salt Spring is situated. This spring presents nothing remarkable in appearance. There is no agitation in the water, as is usual in large springs of fresh water, and the only wonder is that it is able to supply the millions of gallons daily drawn from it. - - On our return from Salina we took the stage to the village of Auburn about twenty-five miles distant,

where we arrived about two o'clock. Here we took quarters at the American Hotel, at the time kept by a Mr. Noyes and found good fare and kind treatment.

After dinner we were politely attended by George S. Throop Esq. a member of the Senate of this state in a visit to the state prison. This prison has been so frequently described by the reports of its inspectors, legislative committees and deputations from other states and foreign governments, as well as by the guide books, that it is deemed useless to attempt a description of it. The village of Auburn is pleasantly situated, contains a population of five thousand inhabitants, has two banks, several seminaries of learning, two or three well constructed churches, a number of manufacturing establishments and has in every respect the appearance of a prosperous and thriving place.

We left Auburn on Sunday the 11th July, 1830, in the stage for Weeds Basin on the canal, where we arrived about 10 o'clock A.M. and had to wait some time for the boat bound west. We arrived at Rochester the next morning, being the 12th of July, at half past six o'clock, and here we found it necessary to change boats as another line ran from here to Buffalo. We landed and ordered our breakfast at a hotel. After breakfast we repaired to the packet boat for Buffalo, where we arrived without the occurrence of anything worth relating at half past eight o'clock the next morning, a short time after having breakfast on the boat. This place is destined to be a large and flourishing city. The situation is admirable for the prosecution of commercial pursuits, being situated at the commencement of canal navigation and at the termination of that on the lake. It was burned by the British in 1814, except a single house which they left standing. Now there are several streets built upon with elegant brick houses. The churches are in good taste, there are two banks in operation, several good hotels, numerous stores and storehouses, with every appearance of a thriving and prosperous place. We were served with a plentiful dinner at the Eagle Hotel, but our friend Dr. Mott was much annoyed by the rapidity with which the Boarders at the house swallowed their victuals and declared the place Buffalo by name and the people Buffalo by nature.

At three o'clock P.M. the Doctor and ourselves engaged a private stage to convey us to Niagara Falls, where we arrived at 7 o'clock in the evening, and stopped at Forsyth's Hotel on the British side of the river, a house badly kept, the beds miserable and the table poorly supplied.

- - - - Wednesday the 14th of July, 1830, we visited the Falls of Niagara for the first time and no one who is able to bear the expense should omit a sight, the sublimity of which beggars all description and which must be seen to be justly appreciated. Our first view was from the British side and after looking at it from above we descended to the foot of the cataract by a winding staircase of 104 steps in order to have a view of this wonder of the world in all its grandeur. The view from Table Rock is considered the best, but looked at from what point you will the sensation of wonder that it excites is the same. The perpendicular height of the Fall is said to be 174 feet and the projection of the falling water is so great as to leave a free passage under it. A gentleman with whom we were acquainted explored this passage while we were there, but we felt no disposition to follow his example, although he returned with no further injury than being drenched to the skin with water. After dinner we left Forsyth's and crossed the ferry about a mile below the Falls at 4 o'clock and took rooms at Whitney's Hotel in the village of Manchester on the American side of the river. This place possesses immense water power and it was named under the expectation that the place would become a second Manchester in its manufactures, but the owner of the land on which the village is built and of the water which flows past it, as we were informed, refuses to sell the fee of either and will only grant leases or become joint owner of the factories which may be established on the premises. To these terms capitalists who were willing to erect factories, if the fee could be purchased, demurred and consequently at the date of our visit the property was in a great measure unproductive.

The various views of the Falls from the American side we found equally interesting with the other. Here also is a staircase descending to the foot of the cataract which is said to be 185 feet from top to bottom while the Fall is only 160 feet, the land or

bluff which the stairs descend being that much higher than the level of the river at the Falls. The most sublime and fearful view however was from a bridge extending from Goat Island to a rock nearly on the edge of the precipice over which the water rushes with fearful rapidity. At this point you are able to follow the water with your eye, from the rock but a few feet from where you stand to the abyss below. Our friend Doctor Mott was much opposed to precipices and refused to follow us to the bridge, but I took him by the arm and led him out and although it was with much fear and reluctance, he acknowledged that it was the greatest sight he had ever witnessed. The person who had the care of the ferry (sic) was accommodated with a small building for his residence, from which there was a good view of the American Fall and I spent several hours in conversation with him on that and other matters. He stated that Forsyth who kept the Hotel on the British side was an implacable enemy to the Americans; that in 1815 during the war between this country and England he crossed the river with a band of plunderers and set fire to Whitney's and Judge Porter's houses, first plundering them of their most valuable furniture, and that some of this furniture was still remaining at his hotel. We stayed but one night at this man's house and had we known his character at the time we should scarcely have stayed an hour. Honorable warfare against enemies in arms is justifiable but when men are actuated in their hostility by the hope of plunder only (as was the case with this man) it is despicable, and such men should be discountenance and despised instead of being supported and enriched as this man is by the Americans.

We rode to Lewistown on Thursday the 15th of July and stopped at the Frontier House kept by Mr. Mann and remained until the next day. Our company now consisted of Doctor Mott and lady and Mr. Lewis of Philadelphia, his wife and sister whom we had met at the Falls, and who wished to form a part of our company. On Friday morning the 16th we hired an extra stage to take us to Fort Niagara. The Fort stands on an elevated piece of land at the confluence of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. From the ramparts of the Fort there is a beautiful and extensive view of the lake and surrounding country. We entered the fort and examined the

magazines in which William Morgan was confined previous to his murder. This Mr. Morgan was a printer and a member of the fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons. He had published or was about publishing a book in which was to be exposed the secret ceremonies, obligations, oaths, &c. of the Masons and thus, as the Masons charged, violated his initiatory oath and became an outlaw in accordance with their creed. He was therefore taken from his domicile by violence, carried to the Fort and confined in the magazine from which he was taken in the night by unknown persons and never heard of since. After the most strict and minute inquiry by the authorities of the state, the issuing of proclamations and offering of rewards for the apprehension and conviction of the aggressors, no clue has been found to the transaction nor has (any) one of the perpetrators of the murder been discovered. - - - -

[For exhaustive details of the Morgan mystery,
see the autobiography of Thurlow Weed, p. 313]

We continued at the Falls until the afternoon of Saturday, the 17th, when we returned to Lewistown and the next day commenced our journey home. We dined at Lockport, a thriving village on the Erie Canal. The double range of ten locks, constructed in the most substantial manner, allow a descent of 60 feet from the ridge above, and the deep cutting through the solid rock of seven miles in length, are works which do great credit to the ingenuity and persevering industry of our countrymen and have deservedly exalted the reputation of this state, both at home and abroad. We lodged at a place called Ridgeway and were wretchedly accommodated both with bed and Board. Our supper consisted of bad tea, brown sugar, black bread and a small plate of dried and salted meat. The lodgings were still worse; feather beds so scant of feathers that we were puzzled to decide whether we were lying on a bed or on a plank; bed bugs by the hundreds and fleas by the thousands. We arose by the peep of day and left our tormentors with all convenient speed. - - - - We left Rochester on the stage on Tuesday, the 20th, at 8 o'clock A.M. and arrived at Auburn at 10 at night, - started again early on Wednesday morning, the 21st, and arrived at Utica at 12 at night, after the most fatiguing and uncomfortable ride we ever experienced. The roads were excessively

bad and the stages without springs or cushions to the seats, which caused a continual bruising of our flesh which amounted to suffering instead of pleasure. - - - - We left Utica in the canal packet at 7 o'clock on the evening of Thursday, the 22nd, on our way to Saratoga Springs, - arrived at Canylnawaga Village at 1 o'clock A.M. on Friday, the 23rd, and took stage for the Springs, where we arrived the same evening at 10.P.M. - - -We left Saratoga Village on the 16th of August 1830 and arrived at Albany the same evening at half past four o'clock, went on board the Steamer North America on the 11th and arrived at our own home, 71 Bowery, at 8 o'clock in the evening after an absence of thirty six days.

(March, 1833)

- - - - In my communication of July, 1834, I stated that as Chairman of the Water Commissioners I had drawn up a paper which was laid before the Common Council stating that the Commissioners were prepared to act providing an appropriation was made to pay the engineers and others which it might be necessary to employ,- that the Common Council referred the communication to a committee and that it was not acted on when the latter was written. The committee made their report however shortly after the date alluded to and an appropriation of \$5000 was made for the purpose of carrying into effect the act of the legislature. The Commissioners accordingly proceeded in the duties required of them by the act under which they held their office. They were to examine and consider all matters relating to the supply of the City of New York with pure and wholesome water, to employ engineers, surveyors and such other persons as in their opinion might be necessary, to make a report of their proceedings to the Common Council with a full statement and description of the plan they might adopt, an estimate of the expense thereof and probably amount of revenue that will accrue to the city on the completion of the work with the reasons and calculations on which their opinions are founded. The only important variations in the duties enjoined in this Act from that of 1833 were the estimate to be made of the probable income that would be derived by the city from the work when completed and the

report of the reason on which our estimate was founded. The Act of 1834 also differs from that of 1833, inasmuch as it directs, if the Common Council shall approve of the report of the Commissioners, that the question shall be submitted to the people at the next charter election and if a majority of the electors are in favor of the measure, it then authorizes the Common Council to borrow on the credit of the city \$2,500,000, and the Commissioners to proceed to carry the plan into effect. The Commissioners accordingly commenced their duties, in the first place by re-examining their surveys and estimates made under the Act of 1833; and for this purpose the same engineer was employed. But in order that we might have the opinion of another on the subject, we also employed John Martineau, a civil engineer, to survey the route from the Croton, and particularly to examine whether the damming of the river near its mouth would not effect the object at a less expense than taking the water from a source higher up. These surveys and estimates were completed early in the last month and on the 16th of February we made our report to the Common Council in accordance with the provision of the Act alluded to.

This report was also prepared by me with great labor in collecting the materials, and considerable mental exertion in concocting them. The only assistance given me by my colleagues was in collecting some of the facts preparatory to an estimate of the probable income to be derived from the work when completed. The Common Council directed 2500 copies of the report to be printed for the use of the citizens and referred it to the Committee on Fire and Water, who reported on the 4th day of March in favor of the plan we had recommended. This report was finally adopted by both Boards of the Common Council and a poll directed to be held on the second Tuesday in April in accordance with the Act of (the) Legislature, for the purpose of ascertaining whether a majority of the electors were in favor of the work being prosecuted.

(December, 1835)

You will recollect that I informed you of my resignation as one of the Governors of the New York Hospital, in consequence of

its interference with my public duties while a member of the Senate of this state. I was lately solicited to resume my station on the Board of Governors, and not having public employment to plead finally consented. I was accordingly elected on the 8th day of April last to fill a vacancy which had occurred in the Board.

For the purpose of concentrating the Republican strength of the Union in the nomination of a suitable candidate for the Office of President of the United States in the room of our venerable and patriotic Chief Magistrate Andrew Jackson, it was recommended by the Legislature of New Jersey that conventions should be held in the several states for the purpose of selecting as many delegates as each respective state had members of Congress, to meet at Baltimore on the 20th of May last and to place in nomination suitable persons for the Office of President and Vice President, to be supported by the Democratic party of the Union. The convention of the State of New York met at Albany on Monday the 6th of April and selected me as one of the delegates to represent this city in the general convention to be held at Baltimore. I attended this convention which opened its session on the 20th of May, 1836. Delegates from 23 of the 24 states were present. Martin Van Buren, of the State of New York, was nominated for President and Richard M. Johnson, of the State of Kentucky, for Vice President and the convention adjourned sine die on the 22nd day of May, 1835.

The poll for election of charter officers was opened in this city on Tuesday the 14th of April and on its close it appeared that the Democrats had carried eleven wards out of the fifteen, and the majority in favor of the supply of good water was 11,367. The work will therefore proceed and the city will not only enjoy the luxury of good water but a protection against disease and the salvation of millions of property from the devouring element of fire. The result of the vote on supplying the city with good water induced the Common Council to enter with earnestness upon the forwarding of the great and important work, and for that purpose they passed an ordinance which was approved by the Mayor on the 7th of May, 1835, to instruct the 1560 Commissioners to proceed in consummating the plan they had recommended. A public stock was

erected, called the Water-Stock of the City of New York, and a loan of \$2,500,000, to bear an interest of not to exceed five percent per annum, payable quarterly, was authorized to be negotiated by the Comptroller and payable by the borrower on or after the 1st of January 1860. One million of dollars was raised on very favorable terms, being taken at twelve and one-half percent premium and the money paid into the City Treasury on the 10th of September, 1835. The remaining amount is to be raised in half yearly sums of \$500,000 each, when required, after the first day of January 1836.

The whole of the money thus raised is to be paid on the order of the Commissioners for defraying the expenses of the work of supplying the City of New York with good and wholesome water. I was again selected by my colleagues as their Chairman, but having served the public in that capacity for upwards of two years without compensation of any sort, I had made up my mind not only to decline serving as Chairman of the Commissioners but to resign the office of Commissioner unless the Common Council allowed some remuneration for the time devoted to the service of the public, and all my colleagues entertaining the same opinion, the Common Council was informed of our decision in order that they might act in the matter as they deemed advisable. The subject thus brought before them and the reasons for and against the measure canvassed, the result was the passage of an ordinance which was approved by the Mayor on the 15th of May, 1835 allowing the Chairman of the Commissioners a salary of \$1500 per annum, and each of the other Commissioners \$1000. per annum.

The work is now progressing with all the speed that a project of so much importance and magnitude will warrant. We appointed Davis B. Douglas Esq., our chief engineer, with several assistants of acknowledged talent and character, and we entertain no doubt whatever, if our lives are spared, that we shall be enabled to complete what we have undertaken to the perfect satisfaction of our fellow citizens. The project is one of the most stupendous ever undertaken in this country, and when completed will be a credit to the Corporation, a blessing to the inhabitants and a lasting honor to all who have lent their aid in carrying it into effect. - - - -

(December, 1836)

I told you that the plan reported by the Water Commissioners for supplying this city with pure and wholesome water was adopted by the Common Council and by a large majority of electors. - - - We were woefully disappointed with the operations of our Chief Engineer and with the persons he had selected as his associates. Shortly after his appointment he recommended to the Commissioners a number of persons as assistant engineers, roadmen, chairmen, and axe men for his corps, or his department, as he would have it, and the whole summer of 1835 was consumed by them in running levels and staking out the property line of the land required for the Croton aqueduct and reservoir. It was late in the fall of this year before this work was completed, and the Commissioners were assured that during the winter the necessary working plans and specifications would be prepared and that some of the sections of the work might be placed under contract early in the ensuing spring. Seven of the assistant engineers were selected, who together with the Chief were to be engaged in completing these drawings and specifications. The aggregate salary of this corps amounted to about \$11,000 per annum. - - -

The act of the legislature under which the Commissioners held their office made it necessary that the Corporation should own the land required for the aqueduct and reservoir before commencing the work of excavation. It was of the first importance therefore that we should possess the maps of so much of the land (158) required for the aqueduct as was necessary to purchase, in order that we might be prepared to negotiate with the owners, and failing in this apply to the Chancellor for commissioners to take it at its appraised value - - - Instead however of bending his (the chief engineer's) whole force to the accomplishment of this object, the winter was consumed with work of little or no value. Three maps of the line or route of the aqueduct were projected, one on a scale of 1000 feet to the inch, one 1300 feet to the inch and one on separate sheets of 130 feet to the inch; all of which was said to be necessary. There were also two profiles of the land through which the aqueduct

was to pass, and the use of these, if any dependence was to be placed in the reports with the profiles furnished in 1833 and 1835, was imperceptible to me. In addition, a diagram showing the size of the aqueduct with the quantity of water that would flow through it at described depths, and one or two unfinished diagrams of culverts, composed the amount of work done by the eight men employed during the winter. The Chief Engineer had gone over the line of the aqueduct with his level three (sic) several times before projecting the maps and profile alluded to; first, before making his report of November, 1833, second, previous to his report of February, 1835, and third, after his engagement with us as Chief Engineer of the works. And he or those belonging to his corps made another survey of this line during the spring and summer of the present year, and we were informed that some important alterations and improvements had been effected that lessened the distance some hundred feet, which is the fourth time this line had been surveyed - - - and if the changes or improvements alluded to be in any way material, all the maps and profiles projected during the winter must be altered or new ones made in their stead. The whole engineers corps, consisting of about twenty men, were employed in the County of Westchester during the greater part of the spring and summer of 1836, and the result of their labor, or (159) so much of it as was useful, is the production of the diagrams of the land required to be occupied by the aqueduct, and those were not received until the 17th of June of this year,

[Mr. Allen continues at some length to describe the shortcomings of the Chief Engineer, in order to test whose skill resolutions were passed 23 July, 1836.] calling upon him to furnish us with plans and specifications of the Croton Aqueduct, the several tunnels along the line of the aqueduct, the embankments on said line, culverts, the Croton Dam, the aqueduct bridge over Sing Sing Kiln and across Harlem River, with proper descriptions of the material to be used, the manner in which they shall be worked together, and all necessary information to enable the Commissioners to place a part or whole of the work under contract with as little delay as possible.

[On July 26th a letter was received from the

incompetent Chief acknowledging the receipt of the above resolutions and expressing his entire willingness to comply. Weeks passed however until September 13th when the Commissioners were requested to confirm the appointment of a new Superintendent and a principal Assistant Engineer, and Mr. Allen and his colleagues now became convinced that the Chief doubted his ability to perform the duties of his office. Mr. Allen and another Commissioner were forthwith deputed to proceed to Albany to interview John B. Jervis, who was then the Chief Engineer on the Erie Canal. Mr. Jervis accepted the position of Chief Engineer of the Water Commission, and was appointed such 11th October, 1836. After some delay the former Chief turned over the maps, field books and other property belonging to the public. His pay ceased 4th November, 1836, since then Mr. Allen writes, "everything has gone on harmoniously."]

(October, 1838)

It is a long time since I troubled you with a letter and probably you may believe there is good reason to complain of my silence; but the afflicting circumstances which have occurred to me and my family must, and I have no doubt will, be considered a very proper excuse.

The occurrence alluded to is the death of my late wife, Sarah Roake. She had complained occasionally for years past of a disorder in her head which caused great distress and suffering, and would often confine her to her bed for a day or two at a time, but it was at no time thought by us or our family physician to amount to anything serious. The attack which terminated fatally continued longer than usual, and all the remedies which usually gave relief failed. The best medical talent and advice was employed, but all in vain, and she departed this life on Thursday morning the 29th of June, 1837, at a quarter before five, in the 56th year of her age. The loss to me at my time of life is irreparable, and to my family the most severe affliction that could have befallen them. She was

a woman of strong mind and strong passions, benevolent, and ready at all times to assist those who needed it, particularly those of her own sex. She was a directress of the Society for the Relief of Aged Indigent Females, and never permitted wind or weather to prevent her usual monthly visits of mercy to the abodes of those under her particular care, for the distribution of the charitable donations, clothes and money furnished by friends of the society. It was believed that on one of those visits, and the last she ever made, her complaint was aggravated. She had been complaining of ill health for a day or two previous to this last visit, and was advised by some of the family to omit it, but the fear that those under her charge would suffer for want of the relief in her possession induced her to venture out, and soon after her return she was confined to her bed and continued losing strength daily until she was relieved from pain by death.

My health continues good and my time pretty fully employed in executing the duties of my office as Chairman of the Water Commissioners. I have already informed you that we appointed John B. Jervis, Esq. our Chief Engineer. - - - - The appointment has proven highly satisfactory and the engineering business has progressed under the superintendence of Mr. Jervis to our entire satisfaction. The Act of the Legislature requiring the Commissioners to report to the Comptroller semi-annually a statement of their expenditure did not direct any report to the Common Council relative to the progress of the work. it was my opinion however that such a report should be made, and in accordance with this opinion I drew up a statement to the progress and situation of the work from its commencement to the first of August, 1836, which was approved by my colleagues and presented to the Common Council, who ordered it printed. My next report was presented to the Common Council on the 9th of January, 1837, and gave a detailed account of our transactions from the 1st of August to the 1st of January following. - - - -

On the 6th of May, 1837, Mr. F. Talmage, one of the Senators from the first district, introduced a section to a bill of the assembly directing the Water Commissioners to make semi-annual reports of their proceedings &c. to the Corporation of the City of

New York. This was only enforcing by law what we had already done and determined to continue doing; but Mr. Talmage being in political opposition to the Commissioners thought he was compelling them to perform an onerous duty not before performed. This gentleman was a Senator and at the same time a member of the Common Council and therefore should have known that two semi-annual reports had been presented to that body, both of which had been printed and made public; but it is presumed he knew nothing of the fact. I was at Albany at the time and made no objection to the section and it passed both houses. Under the act we reported on the third of July, 1837, a full account of our transactions from the 1st of January to the 1st of July ensuing, which kept up the series of our reports in regular order. Our fourth semi-annual report was made on the 4th of January, 1838, and included the events and transactions from the 1st of July, 1837, to the 1st of January, 1838, and our fifth report was presented on the 2nd of July, 1838, and shows the transactions and progress of the work from the date of the last report to the date of the one under consideration. But I must refer you to the printed reports, which I send you with this letter, for a more particular account of our transactions and the difficulties and perplexities we were compelled to encounter in the progress of our operations.

(March, 1839.)

- - - - I propose now to proceed with a description of the early opinions and feelings of our citizens on the subject of a supply of pure water, the incipient measures adopted to obtain it, and in fact a history of the event so far as my information extends. The unanimity manifested by the citizens of New York on the subject of a supply of pure and wholesome water has perhaps never been exceeded on any question heretofore decided through the ballot boxes. - - - -

[Here Mr. Allen offers several thousands words on aqueducts and water supplies in early days in Rome, London, Paris, etc. etc., always proving to his own satisfaction the superiority of the proposed Croton system.]

None of the aqueducts of Rome if I am correctly informed, were of so great extent and capacity as the Croton Aqueduct. - - - - London is supplied by her numerous water works companies with about 30,000,000 of gallons, and our aqueduct is calculated to furnish 50,000,000 of gallons daily, should that quantity ever be required by the residents of the island. Rome can boast however of being the first city where the plan was projected and carried into effect for conducting water from the streams and reservoirs in the mountainous territory of that country. The great works perfected by the Romans for this important object were not confined to the eternal city only, for they are found in almost every place occupied by that ancient and renowned people. At Metz in France, Segovia in Spain and Constantinople in Turkey are to be found the remains of aqueducts, constructed by the Romans, of great magnificence and durability. - - - -

(March, 1839)

- - - - From an early period in our history down to the commencement of the Croton works, the subject of supplying the inhabitants with pure water has been steadily kept in view by at least a portion of the community. An attempt was made, with the sanction of the Common Council, as early as 1744 by Christopher Colles, a native citizen, who undertook to supply the inhabitants from a reservoir erected on the high ground to the north of the fresh water pond, or Collect, - - - - and from thence (the water) was to have been conducted underground, by the means of pipes, through the principle streets of the city. The Common Council of that period issued an emission of paper money for sustaining the project, amounting to 2500 pounds currency, under the domination of Water-works money, and bonds were executed for 8,850 pounds more, appropriated to the purchase of the necessary land on which to erect the works. The war of the Revolution however put a stop to the operations, and after the peace the project was abandoned. This attempt to supply the city, when the population only amounted to 22,000 or 23,000 inhabitants and when the city only extended as

far north as Beekman and Barclay Streets, with a smattering of buildings running along the East River as far as James Street, - - shows clearly that the water had then deteriorated in all that part of the city where the streets were paved and the lots covered with buildings, and this unfitness of the water has progressed in its extent from that day to this in the same regular order in which the paved streets and new buildings have progressed, until it embraces nearly all that part of the island where the earth above the rock is of sufficient depth to insure the finding of water at the usual number of feet below the surface.

I pass without stopping to notice in detail the recommendation in 1799 of Doctor Joseph Brown and William Warton Esq. of the Bronx River as capable of affording an adequate supply, and the Act of the same year, granting the Manhattan Co. a charter as a Water Co.; the surveys by order of the Common Council, of the country between this city and Rye Pond in 1824; the charter granted the New York Water Works Co. in 1825 and its speedy dissolution in 1826, and the report of DeWitt Clinton, Esq., as Civil Engineer in the service of the United States, in favor of adopting the Croton River as a source, of which you can obtain the particulars from the printed reports. Under the act of the Legislature of this state, passed in 1833, a more thorough examination was had than at any former period. This examination and the report of the Commissioners under whose supervision it was made, induced the Common Council to apply for the Act passed May 2nd, 1834, which Act directed the Commissioners to propose a plan, to be approved of by the Common Council and by a majority of the electoral votes of this city, before the Act should be carried into effect. The plan proposed was simply as follows: to dam the Croton River at a place then occupied by Garreton's Mills, about 40 miles from the city; the water to be conveyed in a close aqueduct of masonry from the dam to the Harlem River; the river to be crossed by inverted siphons, thence by aqueduct to the receiving reservoir at 86th Street; thence by a double row of iron pipes of 30 inches in diameter to the distributing reservoir on Murray Hill, and from the distributing reservoir through the streets of the city. This plan was approved by the Common Council on the 6th of March, 1835, and

at the Charter election in April following it was submitted to the people through the medium of ballot boxes, and adopted by a majority of 11,367 votes. On the 7th of May in the same year an ordinance was passed by the Common Council authorizing the Commissioners to proceed in the execution of the plan they had recommended and authorizing a loan on the credit of the city payable in installments as the money should be required in the progress of the work. These loans have been increased materially and the sum paid out on the work up to this time amounts to about \$4,000,000.

(June, 1839)

The debt to be incurred by the city in accomplishing this great and magnificent work will be large, but with proper and judicious management may be prevented from becoming burthensome. The interest or part of it must be raised by tax on the real and personal estate of the city for a few years at least until the water shall be in general use. In time the rents from the water takers should pay the interest on the debt and leave a surplus as a sinking fund which in succeeding generations may be sufficient to liquidate it. If the city had been declining in wealth or population when the work was commenced there might have been some reasons to fear the results; but as the city was then and still is advancing in prosperity and magnitude, no fears should be entertained of the ability to liquidate punctually the interest of the debt. There is surely no impropriety in leaving the principal of a debt, created for so useful and permanent a work, to be provided for by posterity. The benefits will be theirs as well as ours, and as the wealth and prosperity of the city increases, the burthen of the debt will be diminished in the same ratio as the ability to pay and the increase of payers must lessen individual responsibility.

Let us however take a view of the subject as relates to the present and endeavor to see if there are not good and substantial reasons why the debt should have been incurred. The first I shall offer is the inadequate supply, bad as it is. It is

pretty generally admitted that the supply from the wells and pumps is annually diminishing in quantity and quality as the paved streets are extended. No dependence is placed on the wells in case of fire, and was it not for the supply obtained from the wells of Jefferson Market, on the 6th Avenue, from which the tanks at 13th Street are filled, the destruction by fire would be much greater than it now is, and in that part of the city where the water in the wells is but a few feet in depth there is no estimating the amount of damage that would ensue in case of fire, were the wells depended upon. Second,- the bad quality of the water thus scantily supplied is an important consideration. I presume it is not necessary to dwell long on the fact, by way of proof, that the water from most of our city wells is of an unwholesome quality. This subject was thoroughly examined by the lyceum of Natural History of this city, at the special request of the Common Council, and by several eminent physicians of the Medical Association of the city of Boston, all of whom agree that the effect of using common well water is injurious to the constitution and the cause of disease. People may accustom themselves to the use of well water, as they frequently do to the use of tobacco and opium or to spirituous liquors, and it is upon this principle only that we are enabled to account for the fact that many persons not only use but actually like the common well water, notwithstanding that the whole medical faculty attribute many of the diseases which prevail to its use.

There is one fact which I must take the liberty to refer to in support of the opinion that where the water is good epidemic diseases are less virulent than when the water is bad or indifferent. In Philadelphia where the water is supplied in abundance, and of a good and wholesome quality, only 740 persons died by the cholera in 1834, while in New York with a climate full as healthy if not more so, the deaths by that disease during the same season amounted to 3515. Here are two incontrovertible facts; the inadequacy of the supply and the bad and deleterious quality of the water, either of which in my opinion is a good reason why the debt should be incurred. Now the work we are engaged in will not only bring to the city a plentiful supply but a pure and wholesome article. The purity of the Croton water is unquestionable. The

river originates from numerous lakes, fed by springs and brooks, coming from the high and mountainous counties of Putnam and Dutchess, and consequently is far superior to the waters of large rivers, such as the Thames from which London is principally supplied, the Mississippi which supplies New Orleans, or even the Schuylkill which supplies Philadelphia, as these rivers are - - - - turbid and muddy at every freshet which occurs, bringing down the alluvial matter of which the river banks are composed and - - - - the filth of the cities and manufacturing establishments located in the vicinity. This accumulation must tend more or less to injure the quality of the water brought from such sources as the rivers alluded to, while the lakes and ponds from which the Croton proceeds are themselves reservoirs answering all the purposes of filterers, by purifying the water before it discharges itself into the channel of the main stream. - - - -

(February, 1840.)

- - - - You will no doubt recollect that I told you in my letter of October, 1838, that my wife Sarah Roake departed this life on the 29th of June, 1837. I was accordingly left with a family of children about me deprived of the guidance of a mother, and therefore destitute of that control, both by precept and example, so necessary and indispensable to a family of young persons. I however maintained my position as a widower, and with the help of a housekeeper conducted the family concerns to the best of our joint abilities. Matters thus went on very well for nearly two years, when my housekeeper accepted an offer of marriage from a farmer of her acquaintance residing in the county of Seneca in this state, and in order to supply her place in the domestic arrangements of the family I commenced looking for a lady willing to take her chance with me as a wife, and finally made proposals to Mrs. C. Ross formerly Caroline Middlebrook, and with little or no ceremony we were married on the 20th of August 1839, after I had remained in single state for two years and two months. We have now been joined as man and wife for about half a year, sufficient time to ascertain the temper, feelings and disposition of each other and, without

prejudice to former connections, I can truly aver that I am well pleased with my change of situation and have no reason to doubt will continue to be so. Except the foregoing nothing has occurred in domestic matters worth relating.

I have however been steadily engaged in the business of supplying this city with a plentiful supply of good water- - - I prepared the usual report to the Common Council on the progress of the work from January to July, 1839, and again from July, 1839, to January, 1840. At the former date we had 14 $\frac{2}{3}$ miles of the aqueduct completed, and at the latter about 26 miles, - more than half of the whole like completed. You must however refer (169) to our semi-annual reports to obtain a true idea, both of the magnitude of the work and the progress that is making towards completion. You are aware no doubt that the politics of this state have changed hands, and instead of a Democratic-Republican administration we have now what is termed a Whig administration. This "Whig" Party is composed of a large portion of the old Federal Party and of discontented persons who at one time belonged to the old Republican Party, a portion of those formerly called National Republicans and nearly all of those belonging to the Anti-Masonic Party, and to them has lately been added a number of pretended Republicans who are great friends of banks and who call themselves Conservatives. You may see therefore that to define the principles of a party thus constituted would be a difficult if not impracticable undertaking. There is one thing however in which they all agree, viz- hatred and opposition to everybody Democrat that is in or out of office. The present governor of this State and a majority of the Senate being opposed to the Water Commissioners in politics, except one of them William W. Fox, who was formerly a Federalist and now a Whig, there is every reason to believe that he will be retained in his office while the rest of the Commissioners will be removed.

(April, 1840)

The result I anticipated in my last letter has been realized. On the 17th of March, 1840, Governor Seward nominated

and the Senate appointed Samuel Stevens, Benjamin Birdsall, John Ward, and Samuel B. Childs, as Water Commissioners, and removed Stephen Allen, Saul Alley, Thomas T. Woodruff and Charles Dusenbury from office, and on the 19th the new Commissioners took their seats and the public books and papers in the Commissioners office were placed in their possession. William W. Fox was not removed for the reason alluded to in my last communication, but he refused to continue as one of the new Board under the circumstances of the case and accordingly sent his resignation to the Governor, which was accepted and Lebeder Ring was appointed in his place. On the 25th of March we made a final report to the Common Council and gave them an exhibit of the total sum received and expended by the Commissioners. The whole amount received was \$4,380,315.96 and the total expended was \$4,364,614.97, leaving a balance in our hands of \$15,500.99. This balance was paid to Samuel Stevens the Chairman of the new Board, and his receipt taken for the same, which closed our transaction as Water Commissioners. You will find by reference to the aforesaid report that we have left but little to be done or performed by our successors, as all the laborious part of the work in obtaining the necessary land, preparing the preliminary reports, profiles, maps, making the contracts and obtaining the requisite security for their performance, has all been attended to and completed, and much of the important part of the work has been finished and paid for.

You are no doubt aware that I was not superceeded in the office of Water Commissioner on account of any neglect of duty or want of ability to perform my engagements. The whole cause was political, proceeding from the most rancorous and malignant party that ever existed in this country. They style themselves Whigs, but consist of the disappointed of all parties, Federalists, National Republicans, Native Americans, Anti-Masons, Conservatives, Democrats, &c. Had I come into the office as a politician or made use of any means whatever as Water Commissioner to promote party purposes, there would have been some reason for the change; but I defy the world to substantiate the charge, if such a charge be made, that in such instance I prostituted the office to such purposes. The truth is that the promotion of party interests never

entered my mind and so far was I from such considerations that I recommended as the first commissioners to be appointed, five out of the five opposed to me in politics, but when I found a selection had been made at Albany of gentlemen belonging to the Democratic party solely, I made a trip to the seat of government on purpose and recommended to the Governor, the appointment of William W. Fox, in politics a Federalist, but a man of upright intentions and whose knowledge in one branch of the operations, I believed would be useful. The party men were opposed to the appointment, but I told Governor Marcy I required the services of Mr. Fox and unless he nominated him I would not serve on the Commission.

In placing the work under contract too, my inquiry was who were the best men as to ability and the most reasonable as to the price, not what was their politics; and I can truly aver that to this day I am not informed as to the political opinions of more than two or three out of the whole number, consisting of some 200 persons, and that knowledge was obtained by the casual observations of the persons themselves made to others in my hearing and not to me. Neither do I know the political opinion entertained by a single one of the mechanics and laborers employed by the contractors, nor have I sought to know them or introduce politics when in conversation with them at any time, on any occasion whatever, but have rather avoided it as in no way compatible with the business we were engaged in. - - - -

(November, 1840)

I told you some months since of my removal from the office of Water Commissioner and at that time I had no manner of expectation that I should at any time thereafter be solicited again to hold office of any kind, and in fact I had made up my mind as I thought to spend the rest of my life in freedom from the restraint of official duties and to devote much more of it than I had heretofore been able to devote to the interests of the benevolent societies of which I was a member. The duties I had performed as Water Commissioner had precluded me from leaving the city except for a few days for several years back, and now being free to use my

time as my inclination led me, I promised (to take) my family to the Falls of Niagara and other parts of the country for a summer jaunt; but all these pleasant anticipations were completely disappointed by the following occurrences.

A report had been prevalent in the city early in June that I was to be appointed to the office of Receiver General of the public monies under an Act of Congress establishing an independent United States Treasury. I had made no application for the office either in writing or verbally, nor had I any knowledge whatever that I was thought of by the President. I knew however that there were several applicants strongly recommended by the political friends of the President, and therefore doubted the correctness of the report. I could not help reflecting on the subject however, and came to the conclusion to decline the office if tendered, and even went so far as to say to those who informed me that such a report was in circulation, that I did not intend accepting the office should the report prove true. These were my first impressions which are said to be most generally the wisest and ought therefore to be followed. The opinion of others however, especially when that opinion has the appearance of disinterestedness, is very apt to cause us to forget first impressions and fall into the views of those who persuade us that our impressions are not well founded. On the 27th of June, 1840, a son of President Van Buren called on me at my dwelling and showed me a letter from his father requesting (him) to consult me confidentially and ascertain whether I would accept the office of Receiver General for the Port of New York, if appointed. I informed the bearer of the letter that I had made up my mind to decline that and all other appointments for the present at least, but that I would write his father on the subject. I accordingly wrote the President on the same day that I had the interview with his son, to the following effect. I informed him of the interview I had with his son, that I felt much honored by the preference he had given me over others, particularly as the office was tendered without solicitation on my part and as far as I knew on the part of my friends; that I must nevertheless decline the appointment, not from fear of responsibility or trust to be reposed but simply from

a wish for relaxation from public duties in which I had been engaged for the last four or five years and from which I had lately been relieved by Governor Seward, &c. On the 2nd of July, following, I received a long letter from the Honorable Silas Wright, a United States Senator. He stated that he had learned from the President that he had tendered me the office of Receiver General of New York under the independent Treasury and that he had learned further from him that I had declined to take the office.

Mr. Wright stated that this news had afflicted him much and deeply inasmuch as he had for a long time known that the President's mind had been fixed upon me for the place, and he had therefore felt at rest on the subject. He adds that he appreciated fully my wishes to be retired and able to devote myself to my private affairs: "but can you not", he writes, "consent to give your name and character to the beginning of this new system, without doing violence to your personal duties or personal feelings". It is a delicate period. A dreadful contest is depending (impending) over the democracy, and distress pervades the land. The success of the independent Treasury plan must depend in a great degree upon the public confidence drawn around it at the start, and the appointment of men who all the world know to be honest and beyond temptation is one of the most plain steps of policy and duty on the part of the President".

"I am this moment (continued Mr. Wright) favored with a note from the President urging me to write you, and to say that if you will consent to take the office for one year, and shall then wish to leave it, he will be under the greatest obligation, and we will consider your consent. He says in his very short and hasty note, he wants your aid and your standing with the democracy of the city, state and country, to help start the system, that you once told him that you were always called upon to help break in a bad job; but I must tell you, he hopes this will not be one".

"A message (sic) this moment comes in with your letter to him, which he says he has received since writing his note to me and he remarks that it should not preclude my writing to you. It seems to me that if I were with you I could persuade you to say yes to this request". &c.

The subject matter of this letter necessarily embarrassed me much. I was well aware that the office was a very responsible one, and one that would require great vigilance and attention and would therefore not only trench upon nearly the whole of my time but what was worse be a very great burthen on my mind. On the other hand, a wish to secure the cause of the Democratic Party and at the same time comply with the wishes and expectations of the President and of my friend Silas Wright came upon me in opposition to my original impressions. I finally made up my mind to submit the subject to my wife on her return (she then being absent from the city) presuming that the loss of her jaunt to Niagara, &c. on the one hand and the duty of accepting the office on the other, under the circumstances of the case, would probably bring her mind to the correct conclusion. I accordingly read to her first the letter I had received from the President and then the one received from Mr. Wright, at the same time reminding her of the loss she would sustain if I accepted the office, in the abandonment of our summer jaunt. She however was firmly of the opinion that I ought to accept the office, and I accordingly wrote Mr. Wright to the following affect.

I stated that I had availed myself of the privilege of taking a few days after the receipt of his favor for deliberation. That his language was so friendly, and the general tenor of his reasoning so pressing that I had experienced more difficulty in arriving at a conclusive decision than had occurred in any case within my recollection. I told him that my reasons for declining the office were mostly of a domestic nature and perhaps so far as they related to my private concerns, under the emergency of the case, they ought not to be a barrier to my acceptance; but that I had pledged all my spare time to certain benevolent institutions in this city, in whose prosperity I felt a lively interest; that the office I lately held (Chairman of the Board of Water Commissioners) did not materially interfere with the performance of these eleemosynary duties; that the acceptance of the office of Receiver General would not only prevent me from fulfilling the pledge to the institutions alluded to, but would be a complete bar to my leaving the city for any one business day in the year; that the presence of

the Receiver General, as I viewed it, would be required daily from 10 to 3 o'clock, bank hours, for he should both receive and pay or at least be present at all receipts and payments; that this circumstance might be lightly thought of by some, but the situation and feelings of individuals alter the relative force of facts upon different persons; that I valued his good opinion highly, and for the promotion of the Democratic cause I was disposed to make considerable sacrifice; that I thought however he placed much more importance on my acceptance of the office than it deserved and that there were many good men and true that might be selected who would do credit to the office and at the same time benefit the party; finally if I accepted the appointment it must be understood that I would require a few weeks to arrange my private concerns, and if the public business would not be injured by this delay and I am allowed the time alluded to, I will accept the office, should the question still be open and no other person selected by the President for the place before this reaches you.

I was accordingly appointed and shortly after received my commission dated July 15th, 1840, for four years, or until removed by the President for the time being. I entered on the duties of the office on the first day of August thereafter, and am now prosecuting those duties with uninterrupted success thus far.

(April, 1841)

When I wrote my letter of November, 1840, the great contest as to who should occupy the Presidential Chair of the Republic for the four years from March, 1841, was not decided; the decision has however now been made and the Democratic Party defeated. The Whig Party nominated William H. Harrison for the office, and the Democratic Party put in nomination Martin Van Buren, who then held the office of the President until the 4th March, 1841. It would be presumption in me to attempt to detail all the causes which effected so great a change in the minds of the people after a triumphant election of Martin Van Buren to the Presidency only four year since. The only measure he had recommended obnoxious to the opposition was the Independent

Treasury bill. It was known however that his opinions on several prominent and important measures coincided with those held by General Jackson, such as opposition to a National Bank, building canals, railroads &c. in the states at the expense of the United States Treasury, an increase in the tariff of duties for protection only, the distribution of public lands to the several states, or in any shape assuming the debts of the states by the general government. These matters were only brought in as auxiliary charges to support the main accusations that the Democratic Administration under Jackson and Van Buren was the cause of the prostration of business and the bankruptcy of the trading part of the community. The main cause of the evils however with which this community has been afflicted the past few years, as I view it, commenced with and continued during the high tariff of duties levied on the transportation of foreign manufactured goods, not required as revenue by the government but solely as protection to our own manufacturers.

Improper measures in a majority of cases do not show their evil tendency until some time after their adoption. It is in some respects with the body politic as with the body human. If men fall into bad practices such as too extravagant or too high and expensive living, for awhile their feelings are elated, the palate gratified and the intellect brightened; in the course of time however the functions become deranged, the tone of the stomach injured and perhaps inebriation is resorted to, as a palliative of the evils endured. Thus during the high duties of 33 1/3 percent or thirty-three dollars and thirty-three cents on every one hundred dollars of the value of the article imported, money came into the Treasury in abundance. The debt created during the War of 1812 was soon paid off and still there was a large surplus in the Treasury. The Bank of the United States which held this surplus on deposit discounted freely and largely. This induced the local banks, which by these means became creditors, to follow the example of the United States Bank, and money became abundant and the times were called good. Now although money was cheap and the price of every article of consumption high, the foreign commerce of the country was depreciating and the importations had diminished,- while our

own manufacturers were reaping great gains from the consumer. John Q. Adams, commenced his administration as President of the United States on the 4th March, 1825, and ended it in 1829. During the whole administration the high tariff was in operation and for the greater part of it our commerce was completely paralyzed. The ship-yards were deserted, scarce a vessel was seen on the stocks and those at the wharves lay dismantled for the want of employment. Andrew Jackson succeeded Mr. Adams as President of the United States on the 4th of March, 1829. The charter of the Bank of the United States expired in 1836; the Directors deemed it proper to make application to Congress for a renewal as early as 1832, four years before the charter would expire, and at the approach of the Presidential election (the first term of General Jackson expiring in 1833, and he having been nominated for re-election by the Democratic Party) the usual party excitement on such occasions was pretty general. The bank came out as a partisan in opposition to the President, and commenced by extending their loans in order to conciliate the trading part of the community by granting them all they desired; and members of Congress were accommodated that their votes and influence might be obtained for the renewal of the charter. The result was that importations were increased, speculation was the order of the day, and a bill was passed by both houses of Congress rechartering the bank. President Jackson however, disregarding the threats of his opponents and the power of the money kings, returned the bill to the Senate, where it had originated, with his veto. The friends of the bank broke out in violent vituperation against the President and all who supported him. The bank set the press in operation, bought up editors of newspapers and actually procured the printing of political pamphlets against the administration at the expense of the stockholders.

The deposits of the public money were removed from the Bank of the United States, the President deeming the institution unsafe for the custody of the public revenues. The amount held by the Bank of the United States and removed to the local banks selected by the Secretary of the Treasury was said to be from

\$15,000,000 to \$16,000,000. The high tariff was still in full operation and the receipts of the Treasury far exceeded the wants of the government, and thus the accumulation of money in the deposit banks exceeded their power of loaning to advantage by the ordinary process of discount. The brokers and speculators were supplied with any amount of funds required, either on the security of accommodation notes or on the pledge of doubtful stock, such as railroads, manufacturing companies and other speculating projects; the importer increased his orders for foreign fabrics; the jobbers and traders extended their business; the country merchant had extended credit; the speculator - - - - was furnished with the means of purchasing farms, previously appropriated to agricultural purposes but now to be transferred into building lots, which finally becomes sufficiently numerous to accommodate a population of several generations to come. The accumulation of the Treasury suggested the idea of dividing this treasure among the states, and an act was accordingly passed by Congress to distribute the surplus revenues pro rata among the several states of the Union. About \$40,000,000 was, in pursuance of this act, withdrawn from the uses to which it had been applied by the deposit banks and divided as aforesaid. The consequence was a curtailment of bank issues. A prostration of the speculators followed, and finally thousands of importing and trading houses became bankrupt and a suspension of specie payment by nearly all the banks south and west of New York was the next occurrence. - - - -

The speculating or improvement mania was not confined to individuals only, but extended to nearly all the states of the Union, all resulting from the same cause viz. an abundance of money or its representation, bank bills or state bonds. Railroads and canals were the ruling objects and while the speculators were building cities on paper by the help of lithography, the states were contracting debts by the million for railroads, the revenues from which were doubtful, and (for) canals where scarcely any produce existed requiring transportation. State bonds are now selling for half the amount of their face and even in this state, one of the wealthiest, by the imprudence of our Whig legislature and the eagerness to press forward the enlargement of the Erie

Canal to a close, the bonds of the state are at a discount of ten to fifteen percent below their par value. This is a very imperfect sketch and possibly may not be perfectly correct as to the facts and results originating with a high tariff of duties which brought under control of the government large sums of money not required for the ordinary or even extra-ordinary disbursements of the Treasury. That it was the origin of the distress of the last few years in matter of trade and commerce, I have not a shadow of a doubt.

You will no doubt recollect that I accepted the office of Receiver General in accordance with the suggestion of the President that if I would consent to take the office for one year and then should wish to leave it, he would be under great obligation and so would consider my consent. It was upon these conditions that I consented to take the office, and upon every proper occasion they were avowed as my determination, and had Mr. Van Buren been re-elected, my resignation would have been made at an earlier day than it was. As he was not re-elected however, I had to wait until the inauguration of the new President and I accordingly addressed a letter to him on the 6th of March last, two days after his inauguration, respectfully tendering my resignation and at the same time stating that I had accepted the office with great reluctance on account of its great responsibility and trust and that now, as all the preliminary measures in preparing the books and other matters were completed and the business of the office in fair operation, if at his earliest convenience he would appoint my successor and relieve me from the duties of an office I had found very onerous, he would confer a great favor, &c. On the 12th of March, the Secretary of the Treasury informed me that my letter of resignation had been referred by the President to that department, and he was directed to suggest that my resignation was accepted to take effect on the 20th of March or as soon thereafter as my successor would be qualified under the law to take upon himself the necessary duties. Robert C. Cornell Esq. was appointed my successor and entered by mutual agreement upon the duties of the office on Monday the 29th of March, 1841.

The money and other articles in my possession were delivered by me to Mr. Cornell and duplicate receipts taken separately for the money and other articles, such as books, furniture &c. and one of each receipt was transmitted to the Secretary, one of each retained by myself. I also transmitted my return for the week, by which I showed a balance of money in my hands, as by the ledger accounts, of \$347,118.44, showing an excess of cash amounting to \$51.50. This excess can only be accounted for upon the supposition that the bank bills paid me by the Collector of the Customs, at a date not very distant, was \$50 more than the sum intended to be paid, and the loss in that case would fall upon the bank from which he drew the bills. This supposition however is not entirely satisfactory as I uniformly counted the bills received and in no instance found them incorrect. The \$1.50 is accounted for by the receipts of a number of small payments in gold, and though but strict weight when taken singly, the several draughts when weighted together would give a grain or two overweight, and by these means (had) been accumulating from the first of my operations until the last, a few cents at a time, until it has amounted to the aforesaid sum.

I close this long and as I fear uninteresting letter by stating that General Harrison, after holding the office of President of the United States for only one month, from the 4th of March until the 4th of April, 1841, departed this life in the 68th year of his age. His sickness was no doubt caused by a total change in the mode of his living and by the excitement produced in his elevation to an office so far above his expectations or his talents for conducting the affairs of a great nation. - - - -

(October, 1841)

Being perfectly free from the cares of office for once in a number of years, I made up my mind to avail myself of the privilege of taking a jaunt for several weeks. Having been at Saratoga Springs, Niagara Falls and routes both north and east it was decided, in family council, that we would bend our course south and visit the celebrated Springs of Virginia. - - - -

[They left New York on August 5th. Between Jersey City and Philadelphia railroad accommodations were by no means comfortable, and some of the passengers got drunk. On August 6th they went to Baltimore by boat, by train and again by boat, and at Barnum's Hotel found excellent accommodations. On August 7th they left Baltimore for Winchester by railroad, meeting a number of travelers, with whom S.A. exchanged views on the tariff, etc.]

In the after part of the day we had the profound opinion of two young politicians, one a cadet from the military academy at West Point. They came to the conclusion that the mass of the people in the country, taking them as a whole, were only guided by excitement not by reason and reflection, but few being educated except in the rudiments, and therefore could not understand the bearing of measures on the interest of the country, and thus the most salutary measures were often opposed, while the most pernicious were adopted. - - - -

Monday the 9th we left Winchester by stage at 5 o'clock A.M. The passengers were Capt. Middleton and wife, Mr. Wyatt, a single gentlemen of a certain age, and a Mr. Oxley, a young Englishman who was seeking his fortune in this country and withal was a great talker. He knew a little of everything and claimed some knowledge of the business and circumstances of everybody. No subject could be broached, but he knew something about it, and scarce a person could be named, of whom he had no knowledge. He had resided in most of the southern states and his business and permanent residence being in the sickly part of the country, compelled him to be absent during the hot months of summer, which he spent in traveling. Not possessed of much diffidence, he soon formed acquaintance with us and, as we presume, with others in whose company he happened to be. - - - -

At Staunton some of our passengers left the stage, and a person was placed in the one we occupied as a free passenger. This man as it afterwards appeared was begging his way to Kentucky. He was meanly dressed and vulgar in his habits and conversation. The placing him in the stage with no explanation was an intolerable imposition on the passengers who were not backward in making it known as soon as

any of the proprietors could be seen. At Calahan's Tavern where we dined we saw Mr. Porter who was connected with the line of stages, to whom we made our complaints. After dinner we were slyly informed that the stage was ready and all our passengers having been seated except our pauper friend, with Mr. Porter on the box at the side of the driver, the stage started and had not proceeded far before we observed our missing passenger running out of the house with a large ear of corn in both hands and calling at the top of his voice "Stop the stage", but no attention was paid to his cries and we rolled on at the rate of five or six miles the hour - - - Arrived at the White Sulphur at 1/2 past 7 o'clock P. M. - - - -

Thursday the 12th. We are now located, for the brief time we intended to stay at this fashionable watering place, in a cabin by ourselves. These cabins or rooms provided for the accommodation of the boarders are of one story in height and elevated on a side hill from 15 to 20 feet above the dining and ballrooms, which are in separate buildings in the valley below. This makes the situation of the cabins pleasant, being shaded by large trees of the original forest, with graveled paths descending on an inclined plain to the dining room and spring. There are some hundreds of these cabins, generally from three to four built under the same roof and extending around a square of 10 or 12 acres of land, containing a number of forest trees apparently as they stood when the place was first settled. Besides these cabins there are a number of handsome cottages erected at the expense of persons who annually visit the springs during the hot months of summer. They cost from \$400 to \$600. each and are privileged dwellings to those advancing the money for their erection. The owner of the land retains the right to occupy them with other company during the absence of persons who advanced the money for their building, and this is understood by those who occupy them for the time being.

The cabins are about 14 feet square with two doors and two windows one of each in front and rear. Each cabin has a fire place and a shelf or two. The furniture of the one we occupied consisted of three wooden chairs, a common Board table, a small looking glass of 12 to 14 inches, no carpet on the floor, and a bed or mattress of husks, nearly as hard as the floor on which we trod.

Mr. King who appeared to have the management of these matters, and was pretty attentive to us, on application furnished our room with some additional chairs, and a feather bed which made us comparatively comfortable.

The table at the ordinary was very badly supplied and worse attended; the principal meats were beef and mutton, wretchedly cooked and tough as leather. The mutton was either roasted or stewed, we could scarce tell which, and the beef was baked or boiled. - - - - The plan of cooking, as we were informed, was to parboil the meat first and then brown it either before the fire or in the oven of a cooking stove. As for vegetables, there were scarcely any. They consisted of boiled corn and a few of the common potatoes, with tomatoes dressed raw.

All this we could have borne without murmurs, as the pure and elastic air of the mountainous district sharpens the appetite and makes indifferent food palatable and savory, had it not been for the very reprehensible conduct of the servants who attended the table. We soon found it necessary to do as others had done before us, which was to fee some of the servants, or be deprived in a measure of our daily food. And even then it was with some difficulty that we could obtain anything to eat, as the private servants (most southerners bring one or more with them) cut the choice pieces from the dishes previous to the door of the dining room being opened, while we who depended on hired servants could only obtain the leavings. There was in fact neither management or system at these tables, every request only resulted in confusion or noise, and no attempt made, as we could perceive, to remedy the evil.

The whole of the establishment with the grounds surrounding it is owned by a Mr. Colwell, who gives no attention to the Boarders or their treatment, but resides with his family in a separate house near the place of business. We were told that complaints had been made to him of the provisions furnished, that it was not such as the boarders had a right to expect at the charge of \$10 a week, which was the board we were paying. His reply was "Why sir, I charge you nothing for your board, but \$10 a week for

the use of the water, and if you consider this unreasonable you are at liberty to depart when you please."

Captain Middleton and his wife occupied a cabin adjoining ours, which made it pleasant and agreeable to both families. - - - - His wife - - - - was very clever, except that she sometimes rode her hobby too hard. That hobby was the good qualities of her negroes at home, and the great and astonishing capacity of her only daughter, seven years of age, who appeared the idol of both father and mother. She must have been a remarkable child in every respect, as her doings and sayings were the daily theme of her parents. - - - -

Monday 16th. There was a grand hunting party arranged for this day. They started early in the morning with a pack of hounds, said to number 40 or 50. They returned in the evening, much elated with their success, having killed two fine deer of the buck species, and we on our part also felt elated, anticipating a cut of venison for our next day's dinner. In the evening we repaired to the ballroom, which was crowded by persons of all conditions, from the dwellers in log cabins to those occupying palace-built houses in cities. The great attraction we found to be two young ladies, named the Misses Bruce, who were reported to be in possession of fortunes amounting to half a million of dollars each. The girls were quite plain as to personal attractions, and had they been poor would have been considered ordinary; but the magic of wealth dissipated every feature of uncomeliness, and they were accordingly sought after and courted very probably by those whose only aim was their fortune. They had spent some time at Saratoga and on their way home stopped at the White Sulphur where they found admirers who were ready to pay them devotion without stint. Their mother was with them, and it is hoped was enabled to shield them from danger. - - - - In the evening there was a ball and we did as others, attending at the room below. The dresses of the ladies were more brilliant and there were more handsome females than we had seen on any other occasion. This was probably owing to an additional number of Boarders having arrived at the Springs, which always adds to the life of the place. The number of visitors at the time we were there was said to amount to more than 500. - -

Tuesday August 24th. There were two political meetings held at this place this day. The first approving the veto of the President on the Bank bill and the second disapproving it. I did not attend either of the meetings, but understood there was such difference of opinions and disputing at the last meeting between the friends of Mr. Clay and the President, Mr. Tyler, and that a resolution of censure was passed by a small majority. I avoided political dissension on all occasions, and refrained (from) entering into it even when my opinion was particularly requested, observing that I came from home for pleasure and would not mar its enjoyment by disputes on political or religious subjects,- at the same time enjoying my own opinion in silence and hoped others would do the same.

Having seen enough of the White Sulphur to satisfy any person of moderate desires, we made up our mind to leave on the morrow. - - - - We arrived at Dibbell's Spring at 1/2 past six in the evening, where we supped and lodged. The table was well supplied with eatables and the bed and bedding were comfortable. In truth we found good fare and comfortable lodgings at all the springs we visited except the White Sulphur, and comparatively there was not a country tavern on the whole route where we had taken a meal that was not superior, both in fare and attention to that received at this fashionable watering place known as the White Sulphur Springs. - - - - In passing through the villages in our route we could not help observing that it was a rare thing to see a church or meeting house and in this large town (Lynchburg) we could count only three churches. How different in our Northern cities and villages, where the first thing you see in approaching them is the lofty spire of the church. In our rambles through the town we saw but one book store, - there may have been more but in the principle business street of the place we saw but one store where books and stationery were for sale. This, to say the least of it, does not argue strongly for the piety of the people or their fondness for literature.

(Washington) In the evening we made a visit to Mr. Tyler, President of the United States, residing at what is termed the White House. He appeared to possess much suavity of manner,

and treated us with marked politeness. There were a number of visitors, this being the evening appropriated for this ceremony. Among the guests was Francis Granger, Post Master General, Thurlow Weed, Editor of the Albany Evening Journal, two distinguished Anti-Masons of former days, but now vindictive Whigs. - - - -

We arrived at Philadelphia at 4 o'clock and stopped at Congress Hall, the house we stopped at going south. The same evening we attended the Chestnut Street Theatre for the purpose of witnessing Fanny Esler's dancing. The house was crowded from pit to gallery and we could only obtain an uncomfortable seat in one of the boxes on the fourth tier of benches. The performance, except the dancing, was not worth the time spent in looking at it. Fanny danced as usual with much grace and was applauded accordingly. We soon tired of the performance and the heat being oppressive left the house before the conclusion of the play and returned to our hotel at a quarter before ten o'clock.

Thursday, September 2. Took a walk to the High Street Market, - - - - heard much of the superiority of the Philadelphia market, (and) the excellence of the beef, mutton, and butter, but saw nothing excelling the markets of this city. The meats are clumsily dressed and the butter no better than that we have, except it be in neatness of putting it up in rolls. The living in Philadelphia has generally been considered cheaper than in New York, but the depreciation of the money issued by the banks of the State of Pennsylvania naturally increases the price of provisions and other articles of consumption, and this enhances the cost of living which on an average is as high, if not higher, than in the city of New York. - We left Philadelphia on Friday morning the 3rd of September at 7 o'clock by steamboat New Philadelphia which soon took us to Burlington, where we took the Jersey Railroad at a quarter to ten o'clock and arrived at our own residence, No 1 Washington Square, at 2 o'clock, having performed a journey of 91 miles from Philadelphia to New York in less than 6 hours, and after an absence of four weeks and one day from home, we were glad to find all well and hearty.

(December, 1841)

[Mr. Allen describes at some length the progress made by his successor in introducing Croton water. In view of the fact that his name, in bronze letters, has headed the list on High Bridge for scores of years, it is amusing to note that S. A regarded the cost of building High Bridge as the "useless and unjust burthen of half a million of dollars in debt, to please a few interested speculators."]

- - - - I suppose you are correctly informed as to the cause of the great political changes which have taken place in this and other states. The conduct of the Whigs has been so outrageous in loading the country with debt, enacting partial and oppressive laws and particularly in the attempt to force upon the people another United States Bank, that in every election since that of President the Whig Party have been defeated and the Democratic triumphant. In this state there will be a Democratic majority in both houses of the Legislature. The Governor's term of office however does not expire until the 1st of January, 1843, and no change can consequently be expected in the offices subject to his nomination. The State offices, such as Comptroller, Secretary of State, Treasurer, &c. are appointed by joint ballot of the two houses and changes, in all cases when the legislature has the power to appoint, may be expected.

I have been informed that an attempt will be made to replace the former Water Commissioners by passing an act giving the appointment to the Common Council or by rescinding the act of May, 1834, authorizing Commissioners to be appointed, thus throwing the work upon the care of the Common Council, and should the Governor veto the bill strong expectations are entertained that a two-third vote of the Legislature may be obtained. I confess to you that I have felt such deep interest in this work, supplying the city with good and wholesome water, that no trust conferred upon me was parted with so reluctantly. I have ever held it as a persecution of William H. Seward, the Governor, to remove myself and colleagues on political grounds, and no other can be alleged as the office was not a political one, nor were there any political considerations

which should have influenced the selection of the incumbents, or any political duties incumbent upon the commissioners. The office was municipal, the duties civil, the appointment as to time or duration to last until the work should be completed. It related to the city only, the expense was to be paid by the city and the state had no more to do with it, upon just principles, than it had with the business of any private person or company who might appoint commissioners to superintend the building of a church, college or merchants exchange. But however unwilling I was to leave the office, I am not prepared to say that I would now accept it, if offered. - - -

[By an act of May, 1834, the Legislature authorized the Common Council to borrow \$2,500,000., the money thus to be raised to be applied to the purpose of supplying the city with water. The Common Council thereafter proceeded to pay the interest on this stock from the fund thus borrowed, instead of raising it annually by tax. This of course infuriated Mr. A. Part of the proceeds was also used in opening streets and other improvements, and application was made to the Legislature for authority to raise an additional sum of \$3,000,000, all to the wrath of Mr. A.]

The stock having then been forced upon the market in large quantity and much faster than was required for the work, it fell from 11 percent premium to par, then to 10 percent below par, then to 15 and afterwards to 18 percent below par, so that for every \$100 of stock only \$82 was received. - - -

[Meanwhile from 1828 to 1835, water pipes had been laid through the streets of the city and a tax to defray this expense of from \$25,000 to \$30,000 was annually asked on the real and personal estate of the citizens. The money raised on the water stock having been used for municipal purposes, and the City Treasury being heavily in debt to the water fund, a plan was concocted to pay for laying the pipes from the funds raised to supply the city with water. Permission to do this was obtained from Albany in 1838 and \$400,000.

promptly charged to the water fund as money expended for laying pipes for the past ten years, all of which had already been raised in taxes assessed on real and personal estate in the city. Mr. A. continues.]

It is some satisfaction to state however that the Common Council of the year 1838 was composed of a majority of Whigs in both Boards. -
- - - The water stock is now at the ruinous rate of \$79. in money for \$100. in stock.

(April, 1842.)

I have told you that my spare time was devoted to several benevolent institutions in this, my native city, and among others the public schools. My own education being very deficient, arising from misfortunes heretofore hinted at, I have made it a rule to afford my own children ample opportunity for instruction, and have at the same time favored the education of the poor by my countenances, support and patronage when necessary. The public schools have been raised from a single institution, established by a number of benevolent citizens in the year 1805 to their present elevated standing of more than 100 seminaries of learning, annually educating between 30,000 and 40,000 children without cost to their parents, and only by a moderate tax upon our citizens.

The Roman Catholic population of this city have made several attempts to obtain operation of the school money in aid of their church schools in which the peculiar dogmas of the Catholic religion are taught. They have however uniformly failed in affecting their object, so long as the decision of the Question was under the control of the Common Council who represented the people of this city. The public schools are open to all sects of religion, Presbyterian, Methodists, Catholics and others without distinction. The schools were established for the teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and astronomy, the two last branches being taught more as a relaxation from the other studies than as a necessary part of common school education.

Religious and political tenets are excluded for the reason that they are matters of opinion, in which the people of this city as well as others differ and will continue to differ while the frail mind of man continues as it is. None however differ as to the several branches of education taught, or as to the necessity and utility of the knowledge gained by the scholar except the Roman Catholic priests. These gentlemen oppose the schools upon principles of no manner of moment as it respects the main object of their establishment. At one time they charged the Trustees with using books containing passages injurious to their church, at another with using a Bible not correctly translated and without comment; then that the children are taught infidelity, &c. The Trustees have however repeatedly refuted these charges of infidelity and have by every practicable means endeavored to silence the complaints of their Catholic fellow citizens on the other points by offering to expunge from the books used in the schools every line that should be pointed out as offensive, although they might be historical facts undisputed for past ages; but the reading of a chapter in the Bible without comment they refused to discontinue, on the ground that the objection was frivolous and unreasonable. The concessions were all in vain, as nothing would satisfy these gentlemen but a due portion of the money, to be used in church schools where the peculiar religious doctrines such as prayers to saints, confessions of sins and forgiving them by priests, alliance to the Pope of Rome as head of the church, and other inconsistent tenets were taught and inculcated. The Trustees of the public schools are annually elected by the members of the Society, and in deciding on the qualifications of the candidates the only question is, will they devote their time and attention to the duties of the office, not what is their religion or politics, and the same rule is observed in the selection of teachers; the result from recent inquiry is, notwithstanding the complaints of Catholic priests, that three or four of the Trustees and not less than ten or twelve of the teachers are Catholics, and no objection is made on account of their religion, their qualifications and character in other respects being such as fitted them for the station they occupy. In

1840 the Governor of this state, a popularity seeking gentleman, brought out in his message to the Legislature an opinion in favor of the Catholics and their claim for a portion of the school money. This hint, which was not very broadly asserted in his message, induced the Roman Catholics to petition the Legislature on the subject of participation in the receipts of the school money. John C. Spencer, the Secretary of State, seconded their efforts by a report, in many of its statements destitute of truth, with inferences devoid of justice to the public schools, and conclusions unfounded in fact, which if carried out would have destroyed them without the hope of redemption. A bill accompanied this report carrying out the principles it contended for; this bill was defeated by the Trustees and friends of the schools. In 1841 Governor Seward again alluded to the question in much stronger terms than in his previous message. The Catholics were again before the Legislature and the Trustees obtained a hearing before the Committee of the Senate, and so powerful was the argument of our counsel, Hiram Ketchum, Esq. that the bill was again defeated, although the Governor had a majority of his adherents in both houses. This defeat brought out the malignant feelings of Mr. Seward toward Mr. Ketchum, who belonged to the same political party, the Whig Party, as did the Governor. The judgeship for the southern district of New York was vacant by the over age of the former Judge (Odgen Edwards), and previous to Mr. Ketchum's argument in favor of the public schools the Governor had nominated him to the Senate for the office. His acting as counsel of the Trustees induced Governor Seward to withdraw the nomination of Mr. Ketchum and to substitute the name of the present Judge, William Kent, Esq. This transaction needs no comment. It tells for itself and has with other acts of meanness earned for William H. Seward the execration of every citizen of whatever party in this state, and as I believe, in every section of the country.

The Roman Catholics having been twice defeated in their application to the Legislature, now commenced their operations as politicians and in the fall of 1841 they called meetings of those professing their religion, at the head of which appeared the notorious Bishop Hughes. At one of these meetings a ticket was

agreed upon embracing nine of those nominated by the Democratic convention and four Roman Catholics. The result was that three of the persons named on the Whig tickets were elected, and ten of the Democrats. Bishop Hughes' men now formed themselves into a separate party under the name of the "Independent Democratic Republicans". The Democrats on principle, and I profess to be one such, felt disgusted at Bishop Hughes and his adherents and would have preferred to be left in the minority rather than bow to these arrogant foreigners, as nearly the whole of this party, drawn together by Bishop Hughes, was. I doubt they were Democrats, and many of them looking for the loaves and fishes cared little for the principles we were contending for, if they could only serve themselves; consequently when the Legislature met in 1842, it was soon perceived that the Bishop and his party had much more influence than we had a right to anticipate. The Catholics had a strong force at Albany soon after the meeting of the Legislature, and their petition was referred to the Committee on Colleges and Schools, of which William B. Maclay, a member of Assembly from this city, was Chairman. In February, 1842, he brought in his famous report on the public schools of this city. It is full of misrepresentations calculated to mislead the members from the country who have no adequate means of comparing their schools with ours. They are told that the object of the measure is to bring the city schools in harmony with the general system of the state, while the members of the committee from this city must have known that the same system which would suit a stable population like the country must be very unfit for one like this city which is continually changing both as to persons and location. - - - - But I must proceed to give you a sketch of the bill introduced by Mr. Maclay and which accompanied the report. - - - -

The fact appears to be that this bill was drawn with reference to the claim put up by the Roman Catholics and gives them what they were seeking viz, a portion of the money, to be applied to the propagation of their peculiar tenets and religion. There is nothing in the act to prevent the establishment of church schools and they now have schools in operation in at least ten wards in this city where they teach to all children collected, whether

Catholic or Protestant, the worship of the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God, and other of their Saints, with all the peculiar doctrines of the Catholic Church.

You must not infer from the foregoing that I am so opposed to the religion of the Catholics that I would suppress it if in my power, or deprive them of any of their privileges as freemen and American citizens; - - - I also oppose the demands of the Catholics because I am not willing to be forced into the measure of contributing by taxes to the propagation of their religion, and because I think their reasons for refusing to send their children to the public schools are frivolous and inconsistent. In other respects I have no objections to the Catholics or their religion. They have the same right to worship the Deity in their way that I have in mine, and my belief is that there are as good men in their society as in other denominations, and I have, as the occasion occurred, contributed to the erection of their churches, believing as I do that every edifice erected for the worship of God is an advantage to the community at large. At the meeting called by the friends of public schools, to which I have alluded, I was appointed one of a committee to proceed to Albany for the purpose of explaining to the members of the Legislature our views on the bill then before the Senate, which had passed the other house with unusual rapidity, and if practicable to arrest its passage or as a last resort to suggest amendments that might avert the blow intended against the public schools. I accordingly embarked with S.F. Mott, H.C. Cornell, and P. Cooper on Thursday evening the 7th April, 1842, and arrived at Albany the next morning. - - -

[The New York delegation had prepared the rough draft of a bill which, as a last resort, they intended to offer as an amendment to the original. However the bill was rushed through in short order, and while Mr. Allen disapproved of many paragraphs he continues.]

It is however the law of the state and it will become the duty of every good citizen to carry it into execution as far as practicable, whatever may be the result to public schools to which we are so warmly attached.

(August, 1842)

Since my last letter I have had a most perplexing piece of business placed in my hands, the nature of which I intend sketching in this letter. Some five or six years since I purchased a vault in the New York City Marble Cemetery and about two years after the period (purchase?) I was called on by Mr. Perkins Nicholls, the originator of the cemetery, for \$33 said to be for the purchase and ornament of a strip of land in front of the cemetery, which sum I paid him as I had previously done the original sum required for the purchase of the vault. At the date of my purchase I found many of our most respectable citizens owners of vaults in this cemetery and presuming that everything was right, or that the gentlemen who had proceeded me in the purchase had seen that everything was properly conducted. I made no inquiry, knowing that the cemetery was incorporated and trustees named in the charter. It appears however that each person must have thought as I did that the title of the property was good and free from incumbrance and that the money collected from us was properly applied. We were grossly deceived in this our reasonable expectations, as I will proceed to show. - - - -

[About the middle of April, 1842, the vault owners met. S.A. was placed in the Chair. One of the original trustees then came forward with the information that the strip of land in front of the cemetery had been mortgaged for \$3770, which had been paid off by him personally, and also for \$2230, as yet unsatisfied, and that there was due him about \$4500. This matter was referred to a Committee who proceeded to do nothing. The annual meeting was held in May and S.A. was chosen one of the trustees and forthwith called a meeting of the Board. The trustees thereupon called the vault owners. The vault owners authorized the trustees to receive subscriptions to the extent of \$50 from each vault owner. In short, once S.A. set his shoulder to the wheel, things began to move.]

(November, 1842)

[Mr. Allen explains that for 18 years he was a volunteer fireman, and attached to Engine No. 17. It then occurred to him that an insurance company in which the firemen should have considerable interest would be a beneficial institution to that portion of his fellow citizens. Accordingly he used his influence to obtain the incorporation of a company with the usual privileges. The company was incorporated by the Legislators on 18th April, 1825, under the name of Fireman's Insurance Company. Mr. Allen refused to become President but consented to designate a person to fill that office. He, himself, became Chairman of the Finance Committee.

The great fire of 1835 wiped out the capital of the Fireman's as well as that of other companies. However, the Legislature passed an act on 12th February, 1836, authorizing the insolvent fire insurance companies to fill up their capital and continue to exercise their corporate powers for 30 years. Then some disastrous times, which commenced with the failure of the United States Bank to secure re-charter. "Paper to an immense amount made by irresponsible persons was discounted, and loans on inadequate security granted, and several of the insurance companies were sharers in these wholesale robberies." Mr. Allen began to be alarmed for the credit of the Firemen's Co., and insisted upon reducing salaries and general expenses. For example, the President's salary was reduced from \$1600 to \$1200. Whereupon the President got his back up, and as Mr. Allen was dissatisfied with the way business was conducted in the office, a clash followed and the latter resigned from the Board in September, 1842.]

(November, 1842)

You know by my former letters that I take great interest in every transaction which relates to the supplying the city with Croton water, and although I have been disappointed in having the pleasure of having the superintendence of the completion of this

great work, I feel gratified that it is so nearly done and that my anticipations as to its operations when finished have not been disappointed. The Croton Dam, the Aqueduct, and the Reservoir were so far completed on the 1st of June last, as to permit the water to flow down to the Harlem River. - - -

[William A. Cook, reminisced in the New York Tribune for 16th July, 1917. In this connection, he said:

Steven Allen "who a frequent guest at my father's house" stated that it was a grave question among scientific men whether water could be carried from Croton River to New York City, a distance of 41 miles, through virtually a tube. (Roman aqueducts were open at the top.) On the day appointed to make the test to prove success or failure, Mr. Allen took up his post at the New York City end. The water gates at Croton Dam were to be opened at 10 A.M. The engineers calculated that water would not appear before 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Three o'clock arrived and there was no sign of water. At 3:15 the crowd commenced to be anxious. Those who had claimed the scheme would be a failure, had every reason to believe they were right and expressed themselves. At 3:30 there was no sign of water and Mr. Allen said he was almost in despair, when suddenly moisture appeared at the bottom of the aqueduct, and in a few moments "a stream of water not larger than a pencil was distinctly visible."

S.A.'s face must have been a study, as this stream "increased in size rapidly", and the cheers and congratulations of the skeptics, as well as the supply of the Croton water, poured in.]

The first water was let into the receiving reservoir on the 22nd of June, 1842, and on the 4th of July thereafter it was admitted into the distributing reservoir on Murray Hill from which it proceeded through the mains and lateral pipes which have been laid in most of the streets of the city. There was some ceremony observed by the members of the Common Council and Whig Water Commissioners on this

occasion, but what they were I am unable to state, as I did not attend at the time of the performance.

A more imposing celebration of the event was afterwards arranged by the Common Council to come off on the 14th of October, 1842. I received a polite invitation to attend the celebration as ex-Mayor. There was some meaning in this, as I thought, that did not meet the eye. Why invite me under a denomination that had no connection with the work celebrated, while as much of my time and thought had been employed in bringing about this stupendous undertaking? I however concluded to let it pass for what it was worth and accordingly attended the celebration and took my stand as an original Water Commissioner and for that purpose entered the first carriage that offered and by that arrangement had a more conspicuous situation than those who succeeded me in conducting the work.

The celebration commenced with the discharge of one hundred cannon and the ringing of all the city bells. There was a large fountain erected in the park, and another in Union Square at the intersection of Fourteenth Street, both of which were put in full operation on the morning of the procession and they threw the water from 30 to 50 feet in height. There were also several temporary founts erected by the help of the fire hydrants, (sic) which enlivened the scene very much on the line of march of the procession. The day was beautiful and the streets through which the procession was to pass were lined on both sides with human beings; every window and balcony was filled with anxious faces and all seemed to enjoy the hilarity of the occasion. The procession took the line from the Battery up Broadway to Union Square, around the Square, down the Bowery to Grand Street, through Grand Street to East Broadway, to Chatham Street and the park. The procession was about two and a half hours in going through the line of march, and was estimated to be nearly seven miles in length. In proof, it was said when the right reached Chatham Street on its return, the left of the line was passing Chatham Street in Broadway on its upper route. It was also estimated that not less than 20,000 persons walked in the ranks. They consisted of nearly all the uniformed companies of the militia, the firemen, the butchers

handsomely mounted, the numerous charitable institutions and societies of this city, Brooklyn and Jersey City, with banners or flags designating the objects of their associations, the Common Council of this and neighboring cities, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the state, the several Foreign Consuls, the County officers, the boys from the Naval School at Brooklyn, the Commissioners and Engineers of the Water Works, who led the van, and among whom I took my situation. In a concourse so great and numerous I am unable to name all who took part in this great and unequalled procession; it suffices to say that it was not only numerous but respectable and orderly; nothing occurred to mar the good feeling evinced on the occasion, nor was there a single drunken or disorderly person among those in the line or among the multitude who were looking on. After the procession had passed through the park in front of the City Hall, Samuel Stevens, Esq., Chairman of the Water Commissioners, addressed the Common Council, in some respects not very fairly as to the former Commissioners, and in others, perhaps, as much as we had a right to expect from a political opponent.

He said that "in 1829 the Committee on Fire and Water reported in favor of abolishing public cisterns, and building a tank or reservoir in 13th Street; that the Committee avowed their object to be to fill the tank at no distant day with water to be introduced from Westchester. The adoption of this report by the Corporation may be considered the commencement of the plan for the introduction of water into the city." If the Committee contemplated the building of the tank in 13th Street, (as) a commencement of the plan for supplying the city with water, it was what no other person besides themselves dreamed of, for the general opinion was that the tank and well at 13th Street, were solely intended to supply the fire engines at a time of fire, and to suppose that a tank which would only hold about 20,000 gallons would be of any use in supplying the city with water, was, to say the least of it, visionary.

But whatever might have been the idea entertained by the Committee on this subject, Mr. Stevens should not have omitted to mention the services of others rendered seven years before the

report of the Committee on Fire and Water was made. He must have known or he might have informed himself by consulting the minutes of the proceedings of the Common Council the great necessity of procuring a more copious supply of water for this city; that a Committee was appointed of which I was Chairman, who examined the source of the Bronx River and reported in favor of employing an engineer to ascertain the practicability of introducing water into the city from Westchester; that an engineer was employed by me, who in consequence of sickness did not make his report until 1824, a short time after I was succeeded in the Mayoralty by William Paulding, Esq. This report was in favor of introducing the water of the Bronx River, and was accompanied with maps and profiles of the country through which the water was to be conducted, and that this was the first survey ever made for that purpose, and therefore the first positive proof that the water could be introduced, and consequently the foundation for the undertaking, as previous to this all that was said or written on the subject was merely theoretical, no experiments having been made on which to form a conclusion. This survey was therefore the basis on which all the after acts were founded.

When Mr. Stevens spoke of his predecessors in office he said that "In 1833 the Legislature passed the law appointing Commissioners to report during the winter following, and in 1834 reenacted the same law with additional powers. Under these laws the Honorable Stephen Allen, Saul Alley, William W. Fox, Charles Dusenbury and Benjamin Brown were appointed Commissioners. The last named gentleman was soon succeeded by Thomas T. Woodruff. The Commissioners brought industry, honesty and judgment to the consideration of the important subject committed to their charge. They had the duty assigned them of examining and reporting a plan for supplying the City of New York with a sufficient quantity of pure and wholesome water, which the electors of the city of New York could approve or disapprove. Stephen Allen and his associates had the high and responsible duty of determining, not only the line of the aqueduct but on deciding on all conflicting surveys and sources which previous to that time had been considered available for supplying the city with water, as well as a variety of projects

for introducing the water into the city, the character of which may be judged by the one proposing to dam up the Hudson River, &c. After rejecting all these plans and adopting the Croton as the source of supply, our predecessors had other important matters to settle, such as, - ought the aqueduct to consist of mason work or iron pipes? the one carrying with it of necessity a regular grade, while the other admitted of an undulating surface. The most able men up to the period we have referred to differ on this point. Experience we think has shown that the plan of masonry is the best. When the masonry was adapted the question arose whether it should be an open, an arched, or a plank covered aqueduct, and again experience approves of the arched aqueduct. In February 1835, Stephen Allen and his associates, reported the result of their labors to the Common Council, which was required to be approved by that body and also by the votes of the citizens. The report was adopted by each Board and at the succeeding Charter election in April was approved by the people by a vote of 17,330 affirmative to 5,063 negative."

So much for Mr. Stevens speech, and as I think I have written full as much as you will have the patience to read, particularly on a subject so hackneyed, I will close by bidding you adieu.

(December, 1842)

The following letter was prepared by me and signed by a number of influential Republicans of this city. The Charter of the United States Bank had expired on the 3rd March, 1836 and there was a press of the Legislature for the Charter of new banking companies in this state. The plea was that the vacuum created by the expiration of the Charter of the United States Bank must be filled up - that the trade and commerce of the country required it, and that those who had been accommodated by the bank would be ruined unless relief was afforded them by the creation of additional banking capital in this state. I have uniformly been of opinion that banking ought to be thrown open to the public, under such regulation however as would secure the bill holders against loss. We proposed only to restore to every man his natural right

to use his own property in any way he pleased, provided no other person was injured by the operation. The latter however speaks for itself and is as follows:

New York, April 16th, 1836

His Excellency, William L. Marcy,

Sir - - - - The fluctuations in the money market and the present scarcity of that article is a serious evil to the commercial and producing classes of our fellow citizens and ought to be remedied if practicable. We will not attempt to point out the causes which have led to the present state of things, some of which you have alluded to with great force in your message to the Legislature on the 5th of January last, but will respectfully state our views of what the remedy should be. The great requisite is additional capital, but we have no confidence in the increase of banks for supplying it, for we are all well assured that additional banks do not create additional capital. There can be no capital in this state unemployed, and to withdraw it from its present objects for the purpose of investing it in bank stock would rather increase than mitigate the evil. We are led to believe however, should the Legislature in their wisdom see fit to repeal the restraining law, as it is called, as far at least to admit any person or number of persons under proper regulations to open offices of discount and deposit, that speedy relief might be afforded. Without adverting to the propriety of restoring a natural right belonging to every citizen to use his property in such manner as he may deem best, provided the community is not injured thereby, there are important benefits that would result from the measure to the trading and producing classes of our fellow citizens. The character and standing of the person or associations who would manage the concerns of these offices would be much better known and more permanent in their station than those who manage our banking institutions and who are liable to be change at every annual election of directors. This liability to change, together with the reservation of authority to repeal or modify the charters of our banks, has prevented foreign capital from being invested in the local stocks of our moneyed institutions; but as this objection could not attach to the associations for discount and deposit,

there can scarcely be a doubt that the foreign capital would flow into the state and more than sufficient in amount to grant the relief required.

The opening of these offices would be the means of paralyzing if not breaking up the shaving shops in Wall Street, and the notes of good and solvent drawers and endorsers would not then be parted with at two and three percent per month, but discounted at these offices at legal interest if not at a less rate. The fluctuations in the money market would, in a measure at least, be remedied, as these offices may be confined to the issue of specie or bills of specie-paying banks and thus the evil under our present banking system of trading on a credit of twice the amount of capital would in the operations of these offices be avoided. No injury would result to our present banking institutions should the Legislature repeal the law as suggested, but on the contrary they would be benefited. They would be relieved from the pressure in such times as the present and it is presumed they will at no time lack borrowers to the amount they are enabled to loan; and to those who are unable to keep in circulation the authorized amount, the issue of the discount offices would effect that object for them, and eventually benefit in all respects must be the result of the operation.

We will briefly add as a proof of the utility of the measure to a commercial community, that there are 67 banks in London whose business it is to receive money on deposit and to discount notes and we have rarely heard of any evil resulting from their operations, while the bankers out of the city and who are authorized to issue paper money frequently become bankrupt to the great injury of the public. We have this very imperfectly stated some of our views on this important subject, and our apology for troubling you with the subject is our knowledge of the great interest you feel in every measure that will in any way promote the public good.

We are with great respect

Your obedient servants. - - - -

(April, 1843)

- - - - In my letter of November last I gave you a detail of my difficulty with the Firemen's Insurance Company. Shortly after leaving that concern I was invited to join the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company. I was assured by my friends that I could have a unanimous vote of the trustees if I would consent to come in. The stock of the company was then held at from 30 to 40 percent above par, a price I was unwilling to pay; and after a few days consideration I declined to accept a seat under the circumstances of being compelled to purchase \$5000. of stock at this great advance, 50 shares of \$1000. each being required to be held (by a trustee?) in accordance with the provisions of the charter. There was another reason however, though but an opinion, and that was the immense amount of the company's indebtedness, and as I thought loose manner of conducting business and what confirmed me in my fears was the opinion of the banker who I had requested to inquire the price at which the stock could be purchased, when, on telling him I had declined joining the company he said he thought I had done right as he feared there was something wrong with the concern. Having left the Firemen's displeased with the President, I declined making that my stopping place as had been usual, and therefore found it very inconvenient when down town to have no place where I might be found at a particular hour if wanted and where I might rest a while and hear the news occurring after the morning papers had gone to press.

About the date of my last letter (December 1842) I was again solicited to accept a seat in the Trust Company, and to induce me to accept it one of the trustees offered to transfer to me 50 shares of the stock to make me eligible, which I might return whenever I could pick up, as it was offered in the market, a sufficient number of shares, and then return what was lent. Although not perfectly satisfied in my own mind, yet the respectability of the gentlemen composing the Board of Trustees, the want of a place to stop at, and the urgent solicitations of my friends who were members of the Board, finally induced me to consent to a nomination, and on the 9th of December, 1842, I

received the following note from Mr. Bard, the then President of the company.

Sir:-

It gives me pleasure to inform you that you have been unanimously elected Trustee of the New York Life Insurance & Trust Company.

With sentiments of respect,

Wm. Ward, President

Dec. 9th, 1842

At the date of the note I was confined to my house by indisposition and could not leave it for ten or twelve days. On the 24th of December I received the following note.

Dear Sir:

You have been nominated with Mr. Swan, Mr. Ludlow, Mr. Jones and Mr. Brevcort, a Committee, to ascertain beyond doubt, what is now believed, that the company has met no loss through Mr. - - - -'s lottery dealings. The Committee will meet at 12 o'clock on Monday and should be much obliged to you if you will give us your services.

Respectfully yours,

Wm. Bard.

Dec. 24th, 1842

The fit of sickness alluded to had prevented me from calling at the office of the company after my appointment as a Trustee, and I was therefore unacquainted with any of the officers except Mr. Bard, who I had known for several years. The invitation to meet with the Committee therefore was the first intimation I had of any financial difficulties with the officers. I accordingly repaired to the office of the company on Monday morning the 26th and was then informed that an anonymous letter had been received by the President, intimating that Mr. - - - -, the - - - - of the company, was a large dealer in lottery tickets at a particular office which was named. After the receipt of the note, an eye had been kept on the - - - - and he was seen going into the aforesaid office. Next day he was interrogated on the subject and asked whether he had used any of the company's money in the lottery

dealings, which he positively denied. He was then told that no suspicion of improper acts must rest upon any officer of that company and he must resign. He accordingly wrote his resignation and left the office, and (it) appears also left the city on that night or the next morning. It required twenty days of close application to complete the examination - - - - These discoveries had the effect to injure Mr. Bard, though a very honest man, in the opinion of the trustees, and a very general sentiment was entertained that he ought to be removed from the office of President. I was solicited by one of the trustees to take the office, but absolutely refused. Then a Committee of three gentlemen called on me at my house and used urgent arguments in order to persuade me to accept the office of President. I still declined, however, but finally I was invited to meet a caucus of the trustees at the house of one of them, when the subject of a change was once again started, and one of the gentlemen was sent to inform Mr. Bard that he must resign the office of President. During his absence I was requested to retire to another room and on returning to the place of meeting was informed of the unanimous wish of all the trustees that I would consent to serve and permit myself to stand as a candidate for the office of President. I pleaded my ignorance of the duties and my other engagements in several benevolent institutions and my expectation of being reappointed in my former station as Water Commissioner and that nothing would induce me to neglect the duty I owed to these several calls. No excuse or reason would be accepted however and I was in a manner compelled to accept. It was conditionally however, that if in a few months I could see the business of the institution in safe progress and the confidence of the public restored, I should be permitted to retire from the office.

A meeting of the Board was accordingly held on the 21st of January, when I was unanimously elected President with a salary of \$4,000 per annum. Mr. Bard was appointed at the same meeting Actuary, that is to attend to the insurance on lives and granting annuities, at a salary of \$2,000. I considered my salary high and would only accept \$3,000 per annum for my services. I thought it was wrong to continue Mr. Bard in office, at least as far as the

interests of the company were concerned, as it would in some measure interfere with my duties. He, having so long had the control, it would be difficult with him at times to omit assuming the prerogatives of President. Besides persons seeing him there as usual would naturally entertain the opinion that he still guided the ordinary business of the company. But so far as I am concerned, I consider the act of giving him the office and a salary which still keeps up his credit for honest intentions and permits him to live respect-ably, as no more than was due to him as the founder of a useful institution; and although great loss has been sustained by the stockholders through the confidence he placed in a villain, there has at the same time been large dividends paid them amounting on an average to more than 10 percent per annum, and it is but fair therefore to let one of these facts as a balance to the other.

(December, 1843)

Eight months have passed away since I addressed you, and during that period I have been steadily employed, first as President of the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company and second as Chairman of the Water Commissioners. I have heretofore informed you of the circumstances under which I was placed in the first named office but I have said nothing as to the second.

You are aware that our election for Senators and Assemblymen, held on the first Monday of November, 1842, resulted in favor of the Democratic candidates, as did that of the last November. Thus both houses of the Legislature were Democratic. We all expected that one of the first acts of the Governor would be to nominate and appoint the original Commissioners to the place from which they had so unjustly been removed by that mean and truckling politician William H. Seward. It was not however until the 8th of February, 1843, that he nominated and, with the consent of the Senate, appointed myself and colleagues to the office. The Commissioners met shortly after their appointment and elected me as their Chairman, the office I had previously filled from the

commencement of our operations until we were removed in March, 1840.

In examining the state of the work we found several small contracts unfinished and but little of that great and stupendous work for crossing the Harlem River, comparatively, performed. The work was progressing slowly and from the best information we could obtain the work cannot be completed before the year 1846. It is a sore reflection to us that by the influence of a parcel of interested speculators in land upon the members of the Legislature of this state, the city should have been forced into an expense of \$500,000 or \$600,000, more than the plan we had adopted, which was in every respect preferable to the present, as it not only saved this large addition to the city debt, but would have been completed long since, and thus lessened the taxes for interest. - - - -

I told you in my last letter of April last the circumstances which led to my appointment as President of the New York Insurance and Trust Company. My acceptance of the office was temporary and on that condition I held it. This fact I have frequently reminded my co-trustees of and at the monthly meeting held on the first Tuesday of July last, I informed the Board that my intention was to resign as soon as they could elect a successor. There has as yet been little done toward coming to a choice. I suggested to three or four of the trustees, as none of them were willing to accept the office, whether William L. Marcy would not be a proper person, if he would serve. This seemed to take with several of the most influential members and I was requested to sound the Governor on the subject.

I wrote on the 23rd May, 1843, to Mr. Marcy a confidential letter in which I informed him of my wish to retire from my office of President, and that it was so understood when I accepted; that I had conversed with some of the trustees on the subject of my successor, and had taken the liberty of mentioning his name, and asked whether he would take the office if we could elect him, of which I thought there was little doubt. He answered me on the 28th of the same month and apologized for the delay, as he required some days consideration before he could come to a

conclusion; that the employment was not such as he had hitherto thought of engaging in and therefore not an office he should covet, yet under (the) circumstances he thought if offered him he should accept it. He requested me in the meantime to collect the views of the trustees with the expression of my opinion that he would probably take the office if it was the general desire of the Board. I answered this letter on the 31st of May and informed him that for the purpose of understanding the views of the trustees I called a meeting of them at my house, when they appeared unanimous in the choice of him, provided there were no pecuniary embarrassments in his affairs. - - - I asked Mr. Marcy what I should do or say to answer this - - - - Should he accept the office under these circumstances his political enemies should made a handle of it, not only to his own annoyance, but perhaps to the injury of the institution. I told him that I had no doubt the transaction was honorable on his part, but under the present circumstances of the company more than usual circumspection was necessary in every transaction or movement they should make. I stated that at the same time I hoped for his forgiveness for alluding to his private affairs, as it seemed unavoidable in this instance and arose for a sincere wish to serve him as well as the company. This letter was answered by Mr. Marcy on the 1st of June. - - - -

[Ex-Governor Marcy here makes a technical explanation concerning a real estate deal which in no way reflects upon his integrity or business sense.]

He closed his letter by expressing a wish that I would accept his thanks for the kind and candid manner in which I had alluded to the subject brought under view by my letter, &c. I am still in hopes we shall be enabled to obtain the services of William L. Marcy as my successor. - - - -

(April, 1845)

My last letter was dated in December, 1843, by which you were informed of the measures adopted for the purpose of obtaining a candidate for the Presidency of the Trust C. in my place. A

correspondence was again opened with William L. Marcy, Esq. on this subject and having been informed that the difficulties between him and the North American Trust and Banking Company had been adjusted, I nominated him, with the concurrence of other of his friends, as a trustee. There is in this company a great deal of caution used in selecting trustees; 1st, the nomination must be open, and by a majority of the whole number; 2nd, the nomination must be published in the state paper, and in one paper of this county for three weeks previous to election; and 3rd, two-thirds of all the trustees for the time being are necessary for a choice. He was finally elected as trustee, and I urged his acceptance of the Presidency in order that I might retire.

In the meantime however, while we were preparing him for the station, his political friends were urging him to decline the office as in their opinion he would most probably be invited to take a seat in the Cabinet of Mr. Polk at Washington, who had been elected President of the United States in 1844. In answer to my letter informing him of his election as a trustee and hoping there would be no obstacle to his accepting the office of President, he pleaded for a few weeks more time and he afterwards came to the city and called on me and stated that he could not disoblige his political friends who kept urging him to delay the acceptance of the office, but if he did not accept the appointment of Secretary of the United States Treasury, and he would accept of no other office, he would then take the Presidency of the company, if elected. The result of all this was that he was appointed Secretary of War, which he accepted and thus the expectation of my being relieved by Mr. Marcy was put to rest for that time at least.

The next resort was - - - -. The trustees however could not combine upon either of the aforesaid gentlemen and finally decided on a temporary selection from among the trustees. It seemed to be understood that one of the trustees should take the place for a month, when he would be relieved by another, and so on, until the Board should be enabled to decide on a permanent selection. Under these circumstances I resigned the office of President of the company at the monthly meeting held on the first Tuesday in April, 1845, and David S. Kennedy was elected to fill

the vacancy. The Board then passed the following resolution. "Resolved, that the thanks of this Board be presented to Mr. Allen, the late President of the company, for the faithful, zealous and able manner in which he has performed the duties of his office", and it was further "Resolved, that the Secretary transmit to Mr. Allen a copy of this resolution". (signed) John R. Townsend, Secretary.

The following was the state of the affairs of the company when I entered upon the duties of the office of President, and when I resigned the office. On the 1st of January, 1843, a short time before I entered, the capital was short \$113,199.02/100, the whole amount of which has since been earned and added to the capital. On the 1st of September, 1844, we divided to the stockholders, being earnings in addition to the sum added to the capital, \$35,000, and on the 1st of February, 1845, we made another dividend from surplus earnings of \$35,000. On the 1st of April, 1845, when I gave up the office of President our surplus earnings were \$48,294.02/100, making a total of earnings for 27 months of \$231,493.04, which is equal to \$102,885.72/100 per annum, exceeding ten percent on the capital, although the year 1843 was an unusually expensive one.

In addition to the duties devolving on me while President of the Trust Co., I gave all the attention necessary to those of Chairman of the Water Commissioners, when I usually obtained the assistance of one of the trustees to act in my absence, which rarely exceeded one and a half hours after the office was opened. - - - -

I have as usual employed my leisure in reading. Three volumes have lately appeared. First the Vestiges of Creation. This is a curious book and has excited a great deal of talk among the people. The author wades through the various discoveries of the geologists & astronomers and concludes that all nature is operated upon or operates under general laws, that are intended to operate, and so far fixed that the laws are made and kept in operation by the Creator. - - - - Second, Keith's Demonstration of the Christian Religion. The mode of proof is new and striking to me. - - - - I have waded through another volume by

Professor George Buch, entitled the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body Rationally Considered. The Doctor is a very learned man and quotes Hebrew and Greek in abundance, but rather too learned for me. He has written a book of 396 pages to prove, as he says, from Scripture and reason that our bodies will not rise at the last day, but that we shall exist with a spiritual body, &c. I do not think that he has proved his premises, at any rate to my satisfaction, neither do I think it a matter of any importance in what shape we shall exist in another world. The Creator has without doubt provided for that, and to His pleasure be it left.

(January, 1846)

[This letter of unusual length, describes a newspaper controversy between S.A. and one Myndert Van Schaick. "The object of Mr. Van Schaick was to write himself up as the principal promoter of the plan of supplying the city with Croton water." He also claimed that he brought about the appointment of Mr. Jervis, who was so successful as Chief Engineer.

S.A. refers to the egotism and boasting of Mr. Van Schaick and declines to divide with him the honors which he valued so highly. In the course of the controversy six articles were published in the Evening Post of 1845 by Mr. Van Schaick and six by S.A.

"He, (Van S.) evidently wrote under a strong excitement and frequently used ungentlemanly language, but I would not be provoked into the use of scurrility and therefore kept my temper under control, and as I think completely defeated him by argument and proof, partly circumstantial and partly positive." Evidently a good time was had by all.]

(October, 1846.)

- - - - An act was passed by the Common Council of this city in the month of March, 1845, to amend the charter and an application

was made to the Legislature of this state requesting them to pass said act and give it the sanction of said law. As a heavy tax payer in this city, and having a wish to lessen the burden, I was induced to examine this Corporation Act closely. It appeared to me that it was in effect only an act to secure the office holders in their places and to add to the expense of the city some \$40,000 or \$60,000 annually. The tax payers of late years have no manner of influence, as we are generally represented in the Common Council by persons of little or no property and therefore they do not feel the burden they place on those who have property. There were in this act apparent two prominent objects to be gained by the projectors of it, namely to continue themselves in office and to provide for themselves and successors in office additional pay. - - -

You know that an act was passed on the 13th of May, 1845, for calling a convention for amending the Constitution of this state. My name was before the Nomination Committee as a delegate and a printed circular was sent me to which an answer was requested on the next day after its receipt. In compliance with this request the following answer was dispatched, directed to the Chairman of the committee.

April 21st, 1846

To Fernando Wood, Esq.

Sir:

I am in the receipt of a circular put forth by the Democratic-Republican Convention, proposing several questions of serious import, with the request that an answer may be sent to you on or before 12 o'clock of this day. This paper was only received by me last evening and the few hours reflection I have been able to give the subject is by no means so thorough a consideration as I could wish. But, as I have no inclination to serve as one of the convention or in any other office, it may not be necessary that my answer should be so specific as otherwise might be expected. I can only say therefore that, from a general view of the proposed amendments to the Constitution, I do not perceive any objection to either of them and accordingly think, had I a vote on the question it would be in the affirmative. This at

least is my present impression after giving the subject as much thought as the limited time will permit.

Yours Obedt.,

Stephen Allen.

I think you will agree with me that I had a right to conclude, from the particular words of my letter "I have no inclination to serve," that my nomination by the convention was out of the question, especially as there were so many expecting the places. To my great disappointment however, I was nominated. I had made up my mind to decline serving and was in hourly expectation of the usual call of a committee to ascertain whether I would serve or not, but no committee came and I felt a delicacy in announcing to the public that I declined serving them, and therefore kept silent and was accordingly elected by a large majority. Having been very handsomely supported (many of my political opponents gave me their support) I concluded to give such attention to the subject as circumstances would permit and accordingly proceeded to Albany, and was there at the first meeting of the Convention, which took place the first Monday of June, 1846, and continued to give the necessary attention to the business which came before us, until the middle of July, when I found my health so much impaired that it became necessary for me to return home, where I continued under the advice of the doctor for three weeks, after which I spent two weeks at Lake Mahopac, and having regained my health, I returned to Albany and took my seat in the Convention, where I continued until the 12th of October, 1846. - - - -

I must say something to you on the subject of a railroad from this city to Albany, in which I have felt considerable interest. The necessity of such a road has been felt by a portion of our citizens for several years past. There was a charter granted by the Legislature on the 25th of April, 1831, to the Harlaam Rail Road Company with the privilege to extend the same to Albany. The road now extends to White Plains, about 25 miles from this city, and the grading has been performed as far as Somers, say about 50 miles from this city. This is the work of fifteen years.

The fact is the people had no confidence in the projection of this road. - - - -

The Legislature also granted on the 17th of April, 1832, a charter to the applicants for the New York and Albany Railroad. The directors are not named in the bill, but were to be elected by the stockholders. This also failed, as we believed at the time from the little confidence possessed by our citizens in the persons who became directors and had the management of the funds. An attempt was made during the year 1845 by some of our citizens, in which I took part, to purchase the rights granted by this charter, provided the Legislature would pass an act transferring to us all the rights and privileges granted to the directors under the act of 1832. - - - This attempt also failed.

A project was then started by the inhabitants of the several villages on the east side of the Hudson for a road to run along the margin of the river, passing through the villages of Yonkers, Tarrytown, Sing Sing, Peekskill, Fishkill, Hudson, &c. This also failed, no act having been passed by the Legislature, as it was said, through the opposition of the Harlaem and New York and Albany concerns.

Early in 1846 I was induced to meet a number of gentlemen on the subject of making an attempt to obtain an independent charter for a road from this city to Albany. The road from Boston to Albany had now been completed and (was) in full operation, and was drawing from this city much of its trade, and I was led to believe that, if a respectable company would be chartered, in which the public had confidence, that the stock would be taken and the project succeed. Application was accordingly made to the Legislature early in the session of 1846 for a charter, and on the 12th day of May of that year an act was passed constituting all persons who shall become stockholders, pursuant to the act, a body politic and corporate under the name of the Hudson River Railroad Company. The directors named in the charter were John B. Jervis, Saul Alley, James Hooker, James Boorman, Jones N. Wells, Robert Kelly, William Chamberlin, Thomas W. Pearsell, Fortune C. White, Gouverneur Kemble, Aaron Ward, Matthew Morgan, and Stephen Allen.

On the first of September, 1846, the books were opened for subscription to the stock in accordance with the provisions of the charter, one in the City of New York and one in most of the villages along the Hudson, as well as at Albany and Troy. The whole amount of the subscription as I am informed does not exceed half a million dollars. This was entirely unexpected and has caused me to doubt the correctness of my former opinion that the failure in previous instances was owing to the want of confidence in the persons who were to conduct the concern. Another trial will be made however to obtain a sufficient amount of subscription to the stock so as to enable us to proceed with the work. My expectations have been so shaken by the first attempt that I have no hope that the subscription will be filled to the amount that will authorize us to proceed with the work, and if so all I can say is that it is the first public undertaking in which I have entered (that) has failed.

(January, 1847)

I informed you in my letter of October last that a Convention was in operation in this city for amending the Charter, and that another Convention had been in session at Albany to amend the Constitution of the State. These important documents were submitted to the people; the first to the separate vote of the people of this city, and the second to the people of the state, both at the general election for state officers, held on (222) the third day of November, 1846. The City Charter was rejected by a large vote, while the amended Constitution of the State was adopted by a large majority.

The City Charter contained most of the objectionable provisions of that prepared by the Common Council, such as paying the members a salary while the office is sought after, no instance having occurred of a nomination being refused, at least there has been none within my recollection. No restraint was laid on the Common Council in the matter of borrowing money on Corporation bonds; taxes on real estate when assessed were final, allowing no

appeal for errors of judgment. It interferes with the courts, a matter always under the control of the Legislature. These provisions with others induced me to vote against the Charter.

The vote of the city was against the new Constitution. The objection as far as I could learn was the election of the judges of the Supreme Court by the people. The provision is that the state shall be divided into eight election districts, each of which to elect four of the judges. I should have preferred that the whole 32 judges should be elected by general ticket as the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, &c. are. There are some other provisions to which I objected, such as the additional restrictions on the banks, the qualification of witnesses testifying in our courts &c., but I did not feel myself warranted in opposing so important a measure because every part of it did not meet my views, especially when I knew there was a much larger quantity of good than of evil to be gained by adopting.

The following are a few of the benefits which will be realized. First, the prevention of lotteries in the state. Second, electors must reside thirty days in the district where they vote. This will prevent the evil of colonization as it is called, namely sending votes from a strong to a weak district on the evening before election, and providing them with one night's lodging and thus creating for them a domicile. Third, the election of Senators and Assemblymen by separate districts, by which it is presumed the people will have an opportunity to know the men who they send as their representatives. Fourth, members of the district are to receive not exceeding \$400 for each session. - - - - There are a great many other provisions equally beneficial with those I have noted but, I cannot spare the time to notice them at present, especially as I wish to preserve room in this letter to call your attention to the banking projects of Mr. Gambreling. This gentleman reported on the 29th of June, 1846, the following amendment with others to the Constitution. "All individual bankers and stockholders in every association for banking purposes, issuing bank notes or any kind of paper currency as money, hereafter authorized or formed, shall be responsible in their individual and private capacity for all debts and liabilities of every kind

incurred by any bank or association." The prominent reasons offered in favor of this proposition were that throughout the European continent the principle was universally established. - - - - The objection to this scheme which arose in my mind first, what no evidence had been produced showing the fact that the principle of individual liability was general in Europe, and supposing this to be the fact, then let us contrast the prosperity of the European people with that of our own. I would ask whether the people of Austria, Germany, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, France, or even England, are as prosperous as we are? Are they as happy under their restrictive laws as to natural rights or system of banking as we are? No well informed person will contend that they are, and therefore as we have prospered under our system and are contented with the laws established for this purpose, I am for letting well alone and therefore opposed to the proposed amendment. 224

I am firmly of the opinion that it would be impossible to establish a bank in this city upon the principle of individual liability. I have strong doubts whether the proposer of these amendments would invest one thousand dollars in such an institution to be managed by persons over whom he had no control, and with the possibility before him that he might by the mismanagement of directors or the fraud of officers lose his whole fortune, especially while the gain he had a right to expect does not exceed legal interest for the use of his money. The bank capital in this state ranges from \$100,000. in the county to \$500,000. and as high as \$3,000,000. in our city, and it is a well known fact that these capitals are collected from numerous subscribers to the stock and that there are but few stockholders who hold permanently more than \$10,000. to \$15,000. for plain reason that money can be much better invested and more productive than in bank stock. Now will it be expected that a capital can be raised by general subscription while in accordance with the proposed plan every person holding a single share is to be made liable to the whole amount of his property. I am unwilling to believe it. - - - -

This system of separate liability, as I am advised, originated in England and was one of those speculative schemes so frequent in the country. From 1809, when the excitement commenced,

to 1830 when it was at its height, about 500 of these institutions went into operation in England and Ireland and in a few years after 312 of them failed, and in 1836 the number had increased to 400. The result was what should have been expected, the ruin of thousands who by the promise of large profits (were) led to venture their little all in this wild speculation, and others who were induced to receive their bills as money also shared in the general ruin which was the final result of the speculation. Now if these failures have taken place, and there can be no doubt of the fact, as it is a matter of history, what right have we to expect anything better, should this system of individual liability be permitted to take place of our present system under which our prosperity was equal to that of any other people? - - - -

Having felt myself bound to vote against the first proposition of Mr. C. for the reasons above stated, I am also compelled to vote against his substitute which was as follows. "The stockholders in every incorporated or joint stock association for banking purposes, after the first day of January, 1850. shall be individually responsible to the amount of their respective shares of stock in any such corporation for all debts and liabilities of every kind contracted after the said first day of January, 1850."

This provision when it shall go into effect will be throwing an additional burthen on the banks for which there is not the shadow of necessity. The chartered banks are now burthened with the payment of one half percent on their capital to the Safety Fund. This, to be sure is a hardship and particularly oppressive and unequal upon the city banks so with their large capitals of \$2,000,000. they have to pay annually out of their earnings \$10,000. while the country banks most of them having a capital of only \$100,000. pay only \$500. annually to the fund, although the protection is for them instead of the city banks, as the fund has been exhausted by the failure of country banks, no one of the large city banks having failed. - - - -

I contend that the banks of this state are and have been as solvent as ought to be expected; the loss by failure has been comparatively small compared with the good they have done; the

loss has been less than any state to the south and west of us, and not greater than that at the east. No system can be continued which will not be subject to more or less loss; even a specie currency is liable to loss by the mere wear of the metal, and the liability of stockholders will not cure it.

226 Men of wealth will not hold the stock under the constitutional restrictions and the stockholders will be men of small means, whose liability in the event of failure of the bank will be of no avail as they will possess nothing that an execution can reach. - - - -

(April, 1847)

I alluded in my letter of October last to the construction of a Rail road from this city to Albany, in which project I felt considerable interest, and I endeavored to narrate the several attempts made to effect that object. First, in 1831 by the Harlaem Rail Road Company. Second, the New York and Albany Rail Road Company in 1832, both of which failed. Third, that I joined with a number of our citizens in an attempt to purchase the charter of the last company, in which we failed. Fourth, the attempt of the inhabitants of the villages on the Hudson River to obtain a charter and their failure. Fifth, the application to the Legislature by some of our most respectable and wealthy citizens for a road on the margin of the Hudson River, in which I joined and in which we were successful. Under this charter we opened our books in September, 1846, and were sadly disappointed in the receipts of subscriptions to the stock; but on the second trial in January, 1847, after great and persevering exertions on the part of several of the directors, three millions of the capital which is required by the act was fully subscribed and an installment of ten percent paid and the proof required by the act was transmitted to the Comptroller at Albany.

The directors of this company during the period in which the books were opened for subscriptions, acted as Commissioners under the provisions of the charter, and on the motion of Mr. James Bowman, John B. Jervis, was appointed Chairman. Mr. B. took a warm

and prominent interest in the success of the road, and also somewhat of a dictatorial position in the affairs of the company. During the time the directors acted as Commissioners, the stock not being subscribed to the amount required, a president could not legally be appointed, but Mr. B. for reasons best known to himself insisted that Mr. Jervis should hereafter be known and addressed as President.

I have in former letters introduced to your notice the name of John B. Jervis, the able Engineer of the New York Water Works. It was upon him that we depended for the necessary information relative to the feasibility and financial proceeds of the projected Hudson River Rail Road. He examined the whole route personally, estimated the cost and demonstrated the fact that the income would be full equal to expectations. The number of pages written by him and printed would compose a volume, and it was to him that we looked to the scientific oversight of the work as Chief Engineer to carry the project to maturity. As I told you, Mr. Jervis was made President on the motion of Mr. B. but as soon as the necessary capital was secured, Mr. B. changed his tactics and at our meeting for organization he moved that Mr. Chamberlin be the President of the Company, at the same time stating that if he was elected he, Mr. B. would serve as Vice President. I was completely taken by surprise, as not a word had been said in my hearing that such a change had been contemplated. Mr. Chamberlin was accordingly chosen as President and Mr. B. Vice President. - - - -

At a meeting of the directors a Committee of By-Laws was appointed, consisting of myself, R. Kelly and I. Hooper. - -

[At 80 S.A. was still full of fight. A day or two later another meeting of the directors was held at Mr. B's house. At this meeting "one of the first acts was a motion by Mr. Kelly, I believe, but he denied that he made it, and therefore I am wrong", that Mr. B. be appointed one of the Committee on By-Laws. S.A. as Chairman of the Committee prepared a set of By-Laws and the B. By-Laws ultimately prevailed. Then the fur flew. The Allen By-Laws provided that the money could only be checked out by the Treasurer, the member of the Board, or

by an Assistant Treasurer "who shall be taken from among the directors"; The Bowman By-Laws provided for the election of an Assistant Treasurer with no restrictions. The B. majority prevailed.

The stock of the company has been subscribed for, mainly on the estimate of the character of the directors; it was in fact the character and wealth of the gentlemen associated, more than any other circumstance, that induced the filling up of the subscription of three million dollars, and the stockholders will naturally expect that no person out of the Board will have the care of their money. But all I could say was of no avail and Mr. - - - - whose first name I have not the honor of knowing, was appointed assistant treasurer. I made several attempts to amend, but could effect nothing and I therefore left at 1/4 before 11 o'clock at night, while the Board was still in session. - - - -

On Monday morning (March 29th) I wrote the following note and sent it to the secretary with the request that he would lay it before the Board at their meeting that day.

To the Directors of the Hudson River R.R.Co.

Gentlemen:

After due consideration I have arrived at the conclusion that under present circumstances I can be of little use the company as a director, and I therefore respectfully resign my seat at the Board. I have felt confidence in the utility and financial prospects of the road and it is furthest from my thoughts or intention to do anything that will injure the prosperity of the project, but as the harmony of the Board has been somewhat disturbed by a recent occurrence, I have thought it would be most readily restored by my withdrawal.

March 29th, 1847.

Stephen Allen/

On Monday afternoon I received the following note from Mr. Howland.

Dear Sir;

Will it suit your convenience to see a committee this evening at about 8 o'clock, that has been appointed to wait on you. I name that hour as Mr. Kemble is one of the gentlemen, and is desirous of leaving town in the morning. A later hour would suit us should you have an engagement at eight.

Very truly yours,

G.G. Howland.

Monday, 29th March, 1847, 3 o'clock.

I informed Mr. H. that I should be at home the whole evening, and at about the time appointed by the Committee I received Messrs. G.G. Howland, G. Kemble, and R. Kelly, and they commenced by flattering me and declared that the whole Board, including Mr. B., expressed great sorrow at my withdrawal from the company; that it would be a great injury to the concern, as my character stood so high in the public estimation and so much confidence was placed in my integrity of Character, they were sure my withdrawal would materially injure the future operations to a great extent, and paralyze their exertions in carrying forward the project to a successful conclusion, and begged I would withdraw my resignation and much more of the same sort of encomium, &c. I told them in answer that I considered the act a duty I owed myself and as I believe also to the company. - - -

I feared that Mr. B. was of the opinion that the whole weight of responsibility rested on him, while i believed that the public, and particularly our share-holders, held me as responsible for the correct conduct of the affairs of the company as they did him or any other member of the corporation.

I told the Committee that I thought they were mistaken in supposing the company would be injured by my withdrawal, as there was now among the large numbers of subscribers to the stock an excellent opportunity of filling in the vacancy with a much more efficient man than I was; that I should do

nothing to injure the company, as besides my belief in the utility of the project I had made a large subscription to the stock, and therefore self-interest would induce me to serve rather than injure the concern; other gentlemen were not so sensitive as I was and if they could rest easy under Mr. B's positiveness, there could be no injury to the company apprehended from any source. The Committee however continued to press the matter and appeared to be determined not to be refused, and they declared that they had every reason now to believe that there would be nothing hereafter to disturb the harmony of the direction - - - I finally permitted the Committee to withdraw my resignation.

The next morning I had a call from Mr. Chamberlin, the president, who came as he said to express his sorrow at my resignation and hoped that I would recall it. I let him proceed for awhile in the same strain as the committee and then informed him that I had been waited upon by a Committee 231 on the same subject. he said he knew a Committee had been appointed, but he had seen none of them since, and hoped that they had influenced me to comply with the general request. I replied that I had authorized the Committee to take from the files my resignation, which they had done as appeared from the following note.

My Dear Sir:

Agreeably to your permission I withdrew your letter to the Board of directors at an early hour and was in hopes of delivering it to you in person, either at the office of the Water Commissioners, or the Trust company, but having failed in finding you at either place, and obliged to return home this afternoon, I am compelled to forego the satisfaction it would have given me of seeing you and to enclose it, which I now do.

Most truly yours,

Gov. Kemble

April 30th, 1847.

The authority to withdraw my resignation did not carry with it a promise to act with the company but merely to prevent my resignation from having any injurious effect on the concerns of the corporation, believing if I still considered it my duty to retire, they would unite on some proper man in my place. - - - -

(May, 1847.)

- - - - The directors of the Hudson River R.R. Company held a meeting on the 6th of April, 1847, of which I had been duly notified by the secretary, and in which notice the object of the meeting was stated to be to ballot for a Vice-President, Standing Committee and Land Commissioners for the island of New York. I did not attend this meeting but was informed by one of the directors (232) that Mr. Bowman had resigned the Vice-Presidency and that I had been appointed in his stead and also that I had been placed on the Committee for purchase and supplies. Two days after the meeting, viz. the 8th of April, having received no official information of the appointment, I addressed the following note to the Secretary.

John Hopkins, Esq., Secretary, &c.

Dear Sir:

I understand that my name has been used in certain appointments made at the meeting of the Board on the 6th inst., and if so will you do me the favor to send a line by the bearer stating whether I have been appointed to any office, or on any Committee, and if to any, to what office or on what committee so appointed.

April 8th, 1847

Your obdt.

Stephen Allen.

The following answer was promptly returned.

Dear Sir:

You were elected Vice-President and one of the committee on purchase and supplies, on the 6th inst. I put a letter in Boyd's Express yesterday stating these facts, and also that an adjourned meeting of the Board would be held on Tuesday morning at 11 o'clock. I cannot account for my note not reaching you.

Respectfully,
John Hopkins.

April 8th, 1847.
S. Allen, Esq.

The official note alluded to by Mr. Hopkins did not reach me until the 9th. The following is a copy.

Hudson River R.R. Company.
New York, April 6th, 1847.

Dear Sir:

At a meeting of the Board of directors this day, you was unanimously chosen Vice-President of the company. You was also elected one of the Standing Committee on Purchase and Supplies. An adjourned meeting of the Board will be held at the office of the company on Tuesday next 13th inst., at 11 o'clock A.M.

Respectfully your Obdt. Serv't.,
John Hopkins, Secretary.

Stephen Allen, Esq.

I had made up my mind to decline acting in the offices offered me, and particularly in that of Vice-President, which had been assumed by Mr. Bowman, and now relinquished with an intent, as it appeared to me, to lessen my objections to the proceedings of which I complained. Entertaining those views, and feeling no

disposition to hold a mere nominal office, to which there was no duty assigned except during the absence of the President, which ought not to happen as he will be richly rewarded for all his time with a salary of \$4000. per annum, which is at least twice as much as it ought to be, I accordingly addressed to the Board of directors the following letter.

April 13th, 1847.

To the Board of Directors
of the Hudson River R.R. Co.

Gentlemen:

I am in receipt of a letter from the Secretary stating that at a meeting of the Board held on the 6th inst. I was chosen Vice-President of the company. This office I respectfully decline accepting, believing as I do that it is a useless office having no duty to perform except in the absence of the President, which I should presume could rarely happen, and it might therefore be left in the hands of the gentleman who originally held it, as not interfering with his other duties, most of which will be performed by his assistant. I am also informed that I was elected one of the standing Committee on Purchase and Supplies. This appointment I must also respectfully decline. My opinion is that such a committee is unnecessary as every article required for the road will or ought to be supplied by contract; the duties therefore properly as I think belong to the Committee on Contracts. The only committees on which my services would have been useful are Finance and Contracts, relative to the construction of the road, and the Engineer department, but those matters have been otherwise disposed of and I have nothing further to say. I hope it is correctly understood by the Board, as I certainly intended it should be the Committee who honored me with a visit, that in authorizing the withdrawal of my resignation I did not promise to become an active member of the Board of Directors; but merely to continue nominally a Director in order to satisfy the

expressed fears of the Committee that my resignation would be an injury to the concern. I beg therefore that it may be understood that I cannot under my present views of the measures adopted, both as to the manner in which the business is conducted and the high salaries paid, serve as an active Director of the company, but can only continue my name with a wish to withdraw it whenever the Board is prepared to substitute another person in my place. I am truly to be the cause of so much trouble to the Board and hope they will make proper allowance for my feelings and attribute them to the proper cause, namely a firm belief that I cannot act cordially in carrying out measures which I disapprove.

Your obdt.

Stephen Allen.

There was no action on this letter, as I am informed, neither do I know whether the Board intend to supply my place by another. From the fact of the Secretary sending me notices of the meetings, I conclude the question has not been decided.

P.S. I was requested by Lambert Suydam, Esq. to sign a petition to the Legislature for the incorporation of a company under the name of The Mutual Insurance Company; the request was made as far back as 1845. The Legislature granted the request and a charter was passed but was not acted on until March, 1847, when a printed copy was sent to my house, when for the first time I saw my name as one of the Directors. I received with the charter a notice to attend a meeting of the Directors at the office of the Equitable Insurance Company, No. 58 Wall St. I was prevented from attending the meeting in consequence of a previous engagement. A few days after, however, another meeting was called which I attended, and was placed on a committee for preparing a code of By-Laws and no excuse I could make was sufficient to prevent my being placed on the committee as chairman. At the next meeting the By-Laws were reported and adopted. In selecting the standing committees they placed me on the Finance Committee as chairman. I positively declined acting as chairman and was accordingly released, but continued as one of the committee.

These transactions were occurring while my dissatisfaction of the proceedings of the Railroad Company was grating on my feelings, and when I was reflecting on the propriety of manner as I deemed fair, no consideration would have induced me to join another company, as I felt and still feel a warm interest in the success of that project and would have used all my spare means and my influence in forwarding its completion, but all i can now say is that I am disappointed but still hope the object will be affected without my personal aid.

(May 1847.)

This life is made up of vicissitudes and there are few who have been more subject to them than I have been. I stated in my letter of February 1840, that I was married to Caroline M. on the 20th of August, 1879, and that my prospects for happiness or at least contentment under this connection were cheering, but how frequently are out best formed plans and expectations blasted!

I had been acquainted with this lady a number of years, both in her married and widowed state, and was enabled to judge therefore of her fitness to take charge of a pretty large family. My object in marrying her was, I admit, my own comfort as well as hers. I had every reason to believe that she possessed a mild and gentle disposition, as well as the proper quality of a lady, which would insure comfort and pleasure to the family circle, and tend to the improvement both in manners and conduct of my then unmarried daughter, (s?) and in all this I was not disappointed. She was young in comparison to myself and I had every reason to expect she would outlive me and that in misfortune or sickness I should experience her sympathy in the one case, and her nursing care in the other. The first of these expectations has been fully realized so far as health and circumstances permitted but in the second I have been sorely disappointed by her sickness and death. - - - - After a partial recovery, it was evident to me that her lungs were more or less affected and I immediately advised care and circumspection in her daily avocations. She had strong reasons for being thus careful, having lost no less than three brothers of consumption. - - - - She left home in November, 1842, in company

with her sister now Mrs. Merwin, and spent the winter in Havana on the island of Cuba. - - - - The pine barrens of New Jersey were recommended and like a drowning person who will catch at any floating substance, be it ever so small, she determined to try a residence in that pine region and she accordingly spent the summer of 1845 in that district of country. After her return from the Pines, there appeared no other resource but the skill of her medical attendants. - - - - The doctors who were very attentive and I have no doubt exerted all their skill to save her. For the last week of her illness one or the other of them spent the whole night in the sick chamber, but all in vain and she departed this life on Saturday the 24th of April, 1847, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, in the 47th year of her age and we have good reason to believe she has gone to a world of peace and happiness.

My loss is very great, and I am again left a widower and so shall continue during the remainder of my life. I have concluded it of some importance that you should be placed in possession of these facts, and have therefore written this letter as soon after the occurrence of the facts it relates, as my feelings would permit.

**No other letters are accessible, assuming
that such exist.**

Early on Wednesday morning July 28th, 1852, Mr. Allen, 85 years of age, en route to New York City from Lebanon Springs, to collect his August rents, so the story goes, left Albany on the steamer Henry Clay which promptly picked up a race with the Armenia, continuing until about 3 P.M. when the Henry Clay, some five miles in the lead, burst into flames off Yonkers.

Seventy-two people are known to have perished by fire, smoke or water. Mr. Allen was drowned. When the boat was finally breached, the bow was in the wind, the flames thus driving

everybody (238) aft and overboard, though the bow was actually resting on the mud. A young man, acquainted with Mr. Allen, who was aboard accompanied by a Newfoundland dog, swam about taking people ashore. He found Mr. Allen floating at the stern, one hand resting on the boat. To his offer to take Mr. Allen ashore, the latter replied "Take the women and children in; then come back for me." But his age and the shock did their work. This was the last seen of him alive. His watch stopped at 3:26 P.M.

The so-called Stephen Allen "Pocket-Piece", found in his pocketbook at the time of his death, and even now occasionally republished in the newspapers, is as follows;

Keep good company or none. Never be idle.
If your hands cannot be usefully employed, cultivate
your mind.

Always speak the truth. Make few promises.
Live up to your engagements. Keep your own secrets,
if you have any.

When you speak to a person, look him in the face.
Good company and good conversation are the very
sinews of virtue.

Good character is above all things else.
Your character cannot be essentially injured except
by your own acts.

If one speaks evil of you, live so that none
will believe him.

Drink no kind of intoxicating liquors.
Ever live (misfortune excepted) within your
income.

When you retire, think over what you have done
during the day.

Make no haste to be rich, if you would prosper.
Small but steady gains give competency with
tranquility of mind.

Never play at any game of chance.

Avoid temptation, through fear you may not
withstand it.

Earn money before you spend it.

Never run into debt unless you see a way to get
out again.

Never borrow, if you can possibly avoid it.

Do not marry until you are able to support a wife.

Never speak evil of anyone. Be just before
you are generous.

Keep yourself innocent if you would be happy.

Save when you are young to spend when you
are old.

Read over the above maxims at least once a week.



**PARTIAL GENEALOGY OF THIS ALLEN FAMILY
AS DISCOVERED SO FAR**

JOHN ALLEN (I) was born in Holland about 1700 from English parents who had emigrated from England to Holland in the 1600's probably to escape religious persecution. He married Cornelia Bedeut (Bedie, Bedeuw) about 1730. Cornelia was from Norwegian and Dutch families who settled in the Albany and Schnectady area of New York. John and Cornelia had the following children:

Hannah born 30 Dec 1731, Brooklyn, Kings, NY d. 1807

Married 1. Isaac Skinner 27 Apr 1756

2. James Giles, 1 Nov 1766

Mary born abt. 1733, Brooklyn, Kings, NY d. 1812

Married John Mark Green of Rhode Island 10 Nov 1762

Catherine born 12 Sep 1735 Brooklyn, Kings, NY

Married John Flaghard 27 Apr 1769

John(II) born 21 Oct 1737, Brooklyn, Kings, NY d. 1769/70

Married Sabina Maria Meyers 26 Oct 1758

Sabina married 2. Philip Sykes 14 Nov 1780

Stephen born abt. 1739 Brooklyn, Kings, NY

Unnamed baby born and died 1743

John (I) died in 1743 and **Cornelia** 26 Dec 1781.

JOHN ALLEN (II) and Sabina Meyers married 26 Oct 1758

in the Trinity Church, New York City. They had the following children:

John b. 14 Jul 1759, Brooklyn, N.Y

d. 9 Apr 1847, Sutton, Brome, Quebec

Married abt. 1789/90 **Magdelina Andrew (Lany)**

b. abt. 1763 d.15 July 1856

William b. 26 Nov 1761 d. 7 Aug 1762

William b. 9 Feb 1763 d. Lost at sea

Isaac b. 15 Jun 1765 d. 25 Aug 1766

Stephen b. 2 Jul 1767 Brooklyn, N.Y.

d. 28 Jul 1752 Hudson River

STEPHEN ALLEN

- Married 1. **Sarah Marschalk** 17 May 1788
2. **Sarah Roake** 18 Nov 1807
3. **Caroline Middlebrook** 20 Aug 1839

John (II) was considered an excellent carpenter and was given an assignment to go to Pensacola, Florida to supervise the building of barracks for the British. He caught yellow fever and died probably in 1769, leaving his wife with 3 small boys to support.

John Allen (III) conscripted into the American forces, was captured in his first battle. On his way to prison he persuaded the British he sympathized with them and joined Jessup's Loyalist forces which became the Queen's Loyal Soldiers as a Private and came out as a Captain according to records in Brome County, Quebec. He was awarded 200 acres of land in Sutton which was the amount usually given to a Lieutenant. After the war, he settled in Caldwell's Manor, an area partially in Vermont and partially over the border in Quebec while petitioning the British government, with other Loyalists, for land. He married "**Lany**" **Andrew** who probably came from one of the Andrew families who lived in Alburgh, Vermont at one time considered at least part of Caldwell's Manor before the border was determined. In 1802, the patent was granted and the family moved to Sutton, at that time in Missisquoi County, later in Brome County, Quebec.

John and "Lany" had the following 12 children:

William b. 2 Feb 1791 d. 28 Nov 1856

Married **Nancy Griggs** 5 Apr 1819 St.Armand East, Que.

Elizabeth b. 10 Oct 1792 d. 27 Dec 1846

Married **Benjamin Tibbets** 31 Mar 1816

Sabina b. 9 May 1795

John b. 13 Sep 1797 d. 7 Feb 1880

N.Dorchester, Middlesex, Ontario

Married **Lucinda Russell** 1828 New York

James b. 12 Oct 1799 d. 9 Aug. 1854, Sutton, Que.

All the above children were probably born in Caldwell's Manor since the land in Sutton was not granted until 1802, although some people settled there ahead of the grant.

Hugh b. 26 May 1802 Sutton, Quebec

d. 14 Sep 1889 Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Married **Martha Billings** 26 Jan 1831 in Richford, VT.

Stephen b. 1 Aug 1804 Sutton, Quebec

d. 1885 N. Dorchester, Middlesex, Ontario

Married **Priscilla Tibbets** 19 Jan 1840, Sutton, Que.

Eleanor b. 6 Dec 1807 d. 23 Apr 1871 Sutton, Quebec

Amy b. 6 Apr 1809

Married **Ahial Tibbets** 1 Jan 1831, St. Armand West

Sarah b. 14 Sep 1811

Esther b. 14 Dec 1813 d. 23 Sep 1882 Sutton

Married James Grimes

Hannah b. 20 Jan 1817 d. 5 Mar 1825 Sutton

John, Stephen and Hugh moved to N. Dorchester, Middlesex, Ontario and settled with their families there. Many of their children ended up back in the United States.

John died at age 87 on April 9, 1847 and is buried in the Abercorn Cemetery, near the Vermont border, Brome County, Quebec, Canada. "**Lany**" Allen died July 15, 1856 and is buried at his side.

Stephen Allen married first **Sarah Marschalk** 17 May 1788 when she was 17 and he was 21 years old in the Moravian Church, New York City. Sarah and Stephen had 8 children before Sarah died at the age of 31. All the children were born in New York City.

Philip b. 15 July 1789

Cornelius b. 20 Sep 1790 d. aft. 1815

Amelia b. 19 Apr 1792 d. 9 Mar 1871

Sabina b. 1 Jan 1794 d. 11 Mar 1841

Married Abraham Griffen 15 May 1813

John b. 6 Feb 1796

Eleanor b. 21 Dec 1797 d. 28 May 1870

Sarah 21 Apr 1799

Stephen 22 Apr 1801 d. bef 1813

Stephen married second **Sarah Roake** 15 Nov 1807

They had 9 children all born and died in New York City as follows:

Mary Ann b. 25 Jul 1808 d. 21 Jul 1892 N.Y.C.

Married **John Coleridge Hart** 11 Dec 1843

Caroline b. 26 Oct 1809 d. 20 Mar 1884

Married John Lowery abt. 1830

Stephen b. 13 Jan 1813 d. 26 Jan 1843

William b. 25 Nov 1814 d. 4 Dec 1878

Married Catherine Maria Leggett 2 Oct 1838

Charles b. 20 Oct 1816 d. bef 1824

James b. 29 Jan 1818 d. 8 Aug 1858

Married Frances Lutton Porter abt. 1854

Catherine b. 19 Feb 1821 d. 1 Oct 1857

Married John Williams Quincy 23 Jul 1845

Charles b. 16 Apr 1824

Josephine b. 20 Oct 1825 d. 8 Oct 1898

Married Arba Read abt 1848

Stephen Allen married a third time, **Caroline Middlebrook**, on August 20, 1839, hoping for companionship (and help with his remaining children) but she died 24 April 1847 probably of TB.

Stephen died July 28, 1852 of drowning after the explosion of the steamship Henry Clay on the Hudson River.

All of the married children of **John** and "**Lany Allen**" and his brother, **Stephen** and two of his wives have had children and grandchildren and great grandchildren, etc. Giving an account of all of these will no doubt be part of an Allen genealogy in the future.

Information on the Stephen Allen family came from Darryl Bridson.

Anyone with further genealogical information may contact

mildredclough@aol.com

ARTICLES AND PICTURES GATHERED FROM
THE INTERNET ABOUT STEPHEN ALLEN



Plate 15

1 Washington Square North, 1833

William Beach Lawrence(?); Architects

Original Use: Home of Stephen Allen, mayor of New York City from 1821-1824.

2 University Place

Brick; Greek revival style.

An alteration in 1880 replaced the front entrance with a side entrance on University Place.

The home Stephen Allen had built for his family.



SARAH ROAKE ALLEN
Stephen Allen's second wife
Courtesy of Darryl Bridson

Quoted from the Madison [NY] Observer
Tuesday, August 10, 1852

=====

The Burning Of the Henry Clay -

New York Saturday, July 31. [1852]

The Scene of the late melancholy catastrophe was again visited yesterday by a large concourse of persons, of both sexes and all ages, some attracted by curiosity or feelings of sympathy, while others, having relations or friends supposed to be traveling on the Hudson River for business or pleasure have been induced to visit the spot, perhaps not without fears of being called upon to mourn some sad bereavement.

Firing of cannon, near the wreck, was kept up yesterday afternoon with a view of agitating the water and thereby causing it to give up the dead.

The body of the Hon. Stephen Allen was recovered about 5 o'clock P.M. Also the body of Abraham Crist, Esq., a member of the New-York Bar. The friends of J. J. Speed, Esq., of Baltimore, visited Yonkers yesterday and identified his body. His body was deposited in a metallic coffin and sent off in charge of the friends of the deceased. A valuable gold chronometer watch he had when last seen alive is missing; but whether it was stolen or lost in the water, cannot be ascertained. The gold watch of the Hon. Stephen Allen was found to have stopped at 26 minutes after 3 o'clock, and in his wallet was found a small scrap of newspaper, bearing the caption, "Keep good company or none."

About 1 o'clock last evening a floating derrick was towed by two steamers up to the wreck, for the purpose of raising it, when several additional bodies are expected to be recovered.

NEW-YORK, Sunday, August 1.

Bishop's derrick, from the East River, which was brought alongside the wreck on Friday afternoon, and made fast to Ackerman's dock, on the north side of it, was made ready for operation yesterday morning, and at 6 o'clock they commenced to raise the machinery by attaching the tackle to the walking-beam. It was found, however, that it would be necessary to disconnect the shaft; and for this purpose it was raised and lowered several times, causing great delay. The strained and bent condition of all the rods contributed to render the task of disentangling the mass of ruins one of great difficulty. At 12 o'clock, Mr. Germaine, the late engineer of the Henry Clay, had only just succeeded in detaching the beam which was then being hoisted.

This of course is but a small portion of the machinery which must be lifted before the search can be prosecuted; and numbers continued to arrive at the spot during the day, by both up and down trains. All express their conviction that several, some say twenty and some say fifty—but this of course must be a matter of vague speculation - remain under the flans of the paddles of the machinery. It was certain there were two bodies there, as a man, named Henry Lanigan, dived down and succeeded in fastening a rope round the leg of a man, and distinctly felt that there was a second man there. This feat was an extraordinary one, considering the broken state of the timbers among which he had to work under water.

The wreck of the Henry Clay has gone almost entirely to pieces. The smoke-pipe is lying in the water have been very slight, and in their dry condition the flames must have ravaged them as though they had been wicker-work. She is completely burnt on the inside, down to the keelson.

Nothing remains but the mere floor, the machinery, and the smashed paddle-wheels, which are immovable by reason of the weighty machinery attached to them.

As the work continued, the difficulty became more perceptibly great, and it was found it would be necessary to cut through some of the rods with cold chisels, as, in their confused and entangled state, taking out the bolts will not enable them to be drawn up.

They did not seem to be provided with the necessary implements, and the operation progressed very slowly.

The shaft was removed and hoisted out, but the heaviest part of the machinery and boilers remained immovable. It will be necessary to lift these completely, in order to raise the wreck, of which a keelson and floor is alone left, and which of course have no buoyancy.

The impatience of the spectators became very great, as they had evidently expected that their suspense would be more speedily relieved when the derrick went to work; and to appease this feeling, the tackle was shifted to the lurther or starboard wheel, and by this means was so far cased that a body was extricated by means of a rope attached to it, as before described. This was identified to be, as was before expected, that of Isaac D. Sands. It was forwarded to Yonkers, thru an inquest might be held. So pressing is the emergency considered, that they talk of continuing the work this day (Sunday).

BODIES FOUND.—In addition to the corpse extricated from the wreck as above described, as our reporter passed down by the train yesterday morning, he observed beside the track the body of a woman, which had been brought ashore, and ascertained there were some more, which had probably been raised by the discharges from a six pounder brought down for the purpose the previous day.

ON reaching Ackerman's dock, off which the derrick is made fast, he found the bodies of a lady and child; and during the operations before mentioned reports continued to arrive that other bodies had been found.

This lady was afterwards recognized as Mrs. Joanna Handford, widow of Cyrus Handford, Esq., of No. 215 West-Twentieth-street, New-York. The child was also recognized as that of Mr. Elmore Thompson, of No. 180 Henry Street, New-York. Both have before been mentioned and described as missing.

Shortly afterwards the bodies of two females were brought ashore, and remain unrecognized at present. About 1 o'clock the bodies of two well-dressed ladies were brought ashore, which were afterwards recognized as those of Miss Hawthorne, before mentioned as missing, and Miss Moore, of Memphis.

Having been viewed by the coroner and jury, and permission given, the remains of Miss Moore were taken away by Mr. Manning, a cousin of hers, for interment; and those of Miss

Hawthorne were delivered to Mr. Lefoil, for transmission to Salem, her place of residence, for which purpose a metallic coffin was provided.

In the course of the day the body of Mrs. Anna B. Marcher was also recovered and identified, and having undergone the same view, was removed to Eastchester for interment.

The body of her son, also a victim, as before mentioned, was interred on Friday last, at Eastchester.

Mrs. Marcher was an English lady, about 60 years of age. She had been at Hudson on a visit for a few days previous to the fatal occurrence.

The body of another lady, brought ashore, was recognized by Mr. Isaac McDaniels, of Rutland, Vt., as that of his wife.

Mr. McDaniels has been constantly about the fatal scene, in a state of deep excitement and grief, ever since the loss of his wife; and having given his evidence in the evening, before the coroner, he bore his sad burden with him, and returned to his desolate home.

At a late hour in the afternoon, a lady was brought ashore, and, together with the two above mentioned, remains unclaimed at the house on the new steamboat-dock at Yonkers.

NEW-YORK, Monday, August 2.

The scene of the late distressing casualty was visited yesterday by thousands from this and adjacent cities, while it was estimated that no less than eight hundred vehicles laden with residents of the surrounding villages thronged the place, but slow progress is made in removing the wreck, the party engaged in performing that task taking great pains to preserve every particle of the machinery, to the great annoyance of those who are anxiously awaiting the removal of the wreck in anticipation of finding missing friends and relatives.

Four more bodies were recovered yesterday, viz: Miss Harriet T. Kinsley daughter of the late Prof. Kinsley of West-Point, aged 21 years; that of Schoonmaker, late Miss Catharine Ann Demarest of Jordansville, Ulster County; Mrs. Thielman, of Poughkeepsie; and an unknown female. The body of Miss Elizabeth D. Ledyard, of New London, found on Saturday evening, was yesterday recognized by her brother.

Yesterday, at the half-past 6 trip of the ferry-boat from New-York, Capt. Havens discovered the body of a female floating in the river, about 300 yards from the Hoboken shore. It was towed in, and on examination proved to be the remains of Mrs. J. S. Schoonmaker, of Jordansville, Ulster County, whose husband and their niece were also drowned. A striking coincidence occurs in this case. Many of the relatives of the deceased reside in the village of Hoboken, and several of them have been daily at the wreck to endeavor to recover her remains: they returned on Saturday evening, and the next morning the body floats at the very door as if it were, from 18 miles from where the disaster occurred.

Another body, that of a female, floated ashore at Gregory's dock, near Bull's Ferry, in Rockland County, on Saturday morning. Justice Browning was called; but, as the body appeared in an advanced state of decomposition, the coroner thought it to be impossible for it to be one

of the sufferers from the Henry Clay; and, as he examined the deceased, and found no means of recognition, he deemed it inexpedient to hold an inquest, and ordered it to be buried. But it appears that there were various articles discovered (rings, pocket-book, &c.,) by those who took charge of her burial, and these, having been brought to the City, were the means of her recognition. It was the body of Miss Thalman, of New-York, and yesterday her father came and had her remains disinterred and removed to New-York.

All who visited the wreck of the Henry Clay, on the evening of her destruction or the following day, will doubtless remember seeing the beautiful child of Mrs. Handford; while alluding to it yesterday, we were informed by an intimate friend of that lamented lady of a singular fatality connected with her family, which we deem worthy of notice. About three years ago, Mr. Handford's father died suddenly while traveling on one of our northern lakes: subsequently, Mrs. Handford's father and a brother were drowned together - and, still subsequently, an uncle and a nephew were drowned together; and, lastly, Mrs. Handford and her infant child were drowned together. Mr. Handford died about eight months ago.

NEW-YORK, Tuesday, August 3.

The hull of the steamer Henry Clay was partially raised last evening, and, contrary to expectation, only one body was found; but as there are numerous fragments yet to be removed, it is probable that others may be recovered in the course of today.

Another body was recovered from the river, in the vicinity of the wreck, late last evening, and while passing up the Hudson River Railroad, in the afternoon, our reporter noticed the body of a female floating down the river, near the shore, opposite Fort Washington.

The body of a female found near Fort Washington, a description of which we gave yesterday morning, was recognized in the course of the day to be that of Mrs. Emeline E. Milligan, 19 years of age, whose husband, Mr. John Milligan, resides at No. 177 West Twenty-sixth-street. Deceased was a passenger on board the Henry Clay, and lost her life at the time of the destruction of that vessel. She got on board at Catskill, and was returning home, after having completed a visit to her friends at that place. Her remains were taken in charge by Mr. Milligan for Interment. It is feared that her mother, Mrs. Esther Tompkins, was onboard the same steamer, and that she was lost.

From information obtained yesterday morning, there is strong reason to believe that Mr. George Bell of Alexandria, Va., his wife, his wife's sister, and two children, one a girl aged 5 years, and a boy 3 years old, were lost from the Henry Clay. Mr. Bell started from home, about ten days ago, to fetch Mrs. Bell, his child, who had been on a visit to Mrs. Bell's father, residing near Rochester, and the family were expected at home, by the middle of last week, but as yet they have not returned, nor have any tidings been obtained respecting them; in consequence of which, under the present circumstances, their friends are in the greatest distress of mind.

Miss Elizabeth Hillman, of Troy, who was lost from the Henry Clay on Wednesday last, was a sister of Isaac Hillman, the celebrated razor-strop man, who is now in California. On the departure of her brother for the gold-diggings, she assumed the management of the business, and was on her way down to the City on a visit to Henry Smith, her principal customer; also, to make her will.

SCENE AT THE GRAVE *on Friday evening, July 30.*

The funeral procession passed through the village as the twilight was yielding to the darkness of night. The impressiveness of the scene was heightened by the slow tolling of the bell, and by the fierce lightning and the rolling thunder of the heavens. The five bodies of the unrecognized were lowered into the grave, when the following brief address was made by the Rev. Mr. Seward, of the Presbyterian Church:

Here, amid the shades of evening and beneath a dark and frowning sky, we commit the bodies of these strangers to the ground. Earth to earth—ashes to ashes—dust to dust.

By strangers hands their dying eyes were closed,

By strangers hands their decent limbs composed,

By strangers followed to their last, long home;

By strangers honored, and by strangers mourned.

As the sun, rising ere long from yonder black horizon, shall lift the veil of night and disperse these threatening clouds, so shall it be also with the darkness of the tomb. The night of death shall pass, and the morning of the resurrection dawn; a light sharper than that now flashing in the angry sky shall pierce these graves; and 'the voice of the archangel,' louder than the muttering thunder, shall awake the dead; and they shall come forth and stand in the presence of the Judge. Oh, when to us this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then God in mercy bring to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' Now the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath died and risen again, who is the resurrection and the life, be with you all. Amen."

Another mournful procession passed through the village a little before the setting of the sun on Sabbath evening, following the remains of other victims of this calamity whose bodies had not been claimed by friends. These were conveyed to St. John's Cemetery, and there deposited by the side of those whom the same judgment had overtaken. Hundreds were gathered around the graves, and deep stillness and solemnity prevailed.

The Burning of the Henry Clay

Print
by
Currier
&
Ives



by Stephen Allen, Mayor

of the

City of New York.

To all to whom these presents shall come. Greeting.

John Henry Hobart
The bearer hereof the Right Reverend John Henry
Hobart Bishop of the State of New York, a Citizen of
the United States, and a Gentleman of distinguished
Pity and talents as a Prelate, and of worth and virtue
as a Citizen, whose name is inscribed in the margin in his
own proper hand writing, being about to pass into Foreign
countries for his health. These are therefore to recommend
the said Right Reverend John Henry Hobart to the kindness
and protection of the Magistrates and Citizens of the
said Countries through which he may pass.

Given under my hand and the
Seal of Mayoralty of the
City of New York this 22nd
day of September in the year of our Lord
One thousand eight hundred and twenty three

Stephen Allen

Passport from the Mayor of New York
to Bishop Hobart. 1823.