

FROM Theodore S. Fay*

Legation U. States
Berlin, March 26, 1846

3247-44
6648

Dear Sir,

When last in Berlin, you expressed a wish to procure certain information from the Russian government, upon the subject of its military administration. In Mr. (Henry) Wheaton's* absence, I applied, thro the Minister of Foreign affairs, to the War Department, & received, in reply, a number of Mss., which I this day forward to your address, Boston, U. S. A., thro the American War Department, under cover to the Adjutant General of the U. S. Army. They would have been sent before but I did not know whether you were yet in Europe or not. Under the circumstances I have presumed it would be most convenient to you to receive them on your return to Boston. I have the honor to be, very respectfully,
Yr. Obedt. Servt. THEO. S. FAY

Colonel S. Thayer etc etc Boston.

*See Index

FROM George Cheyne Shattuck*

(April 15, 1846)

Dear Sir,

By Mr. (Charles) Parker* after his return by letter I learned much of you. He has not come to Boston. I sent him his books from the box containing yours. His father (Daniel Parker)* you may have learned has just died at Washington.

You will be pleased to learn the health of your friends & the prosperity of the Country. The Massachusetts Cotton Mills paid a semiannual dividend of ten per cent the last of January. The Boston & Maine Rail Road has created additional stock distributed pro rate among the stockholders at par. the stock now sells at 14 perct. advance. your proportion was two new shares, the ratio was one new one for five old ones. For these I have paid & taken a receipt. Your money collected from your stocks is deposited in your name in Atlas Bank which has recovered its position, gives good dividends, and reserves a surplus.

I send you this hasty note by Dr. (Reuben D.) Mussey* of Cincinnati, who can tell you much of the Country, although I hope to see you soon. I have been so long accustomed to behold the light of your countenance as depicted by Sully, I shall request of you permission to take a copy when you repossess the portrait.

My wife & Niece beg to be remembered to you. That God may bless you & restore you to your country is the prayer of

GEO. C. SHATTUCK.

Boston April 15, 1846
Col. Sylvanus Thayer
Paris

*See Index

FROM Hector Bossange¹

Dear Colonel -

Madame Bossange has asked me to invite you to come for dinner at our home next Wednesday so that the family on rue de Varenne may say good-bye.

You will give us the greatest of pleasure if you will accept our invitation. Affectionately, HECTOR BOSSANGE

Paris, Monday, 18 May 1846

¹ Original in French

TO Ichabod Chadbourne*

Newyork June 28th 1846

My dear friend,

I landed last evening after a passage of 33 days from Havre. I was happy to find the Oregon question settled & the more from its being unexpected. You can better imagine than I can describe my feelings in reading the Reports & accounts relative to the achievements of our little Army in Texas & Mexico. The sons of West Point have covered themselves with glory. But alas there is no peace (gard) on earth. My Joy is not unmingled with groans & tears. I have lost several of my dearest friends but I am more particularly affected by the loss of your Son. I need not say how truly I sympathize with the father & the mother but there is consolation in the reflection that he has died as every true soldier must wish to die for his country, on the bed of honor, in the arms of victory leaving an immortal name.

I write in haste & in relation to myself can only say that my health has improved. Ever faithfully yours S. THAYER
Col. I. R. Chadbourne
East Port Me.

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Totten*¹

New York, June 28th, 1846

Sir:

I arrived here yesterday after a passage of 33 days from Havre & have now the honor to report myself for duty. I am respectfully Your obdt servt S. THAYER, Lt. Col. Engrs.
Bt Col

Col. J. G. Totten
Chief Engineer
Washington

*See Index

¹ Original not available for proofing

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department
Washington Dec 8, 1846

Col. S. Thayer
Corps of Engrs
Boston

Sir,

Your letter of the 3d inst is recd. Lieut. (John Gray) Foster* is now engaged on a drawing of barracks which is the result of much study, inquiry, etc; & when finished, which will I hope be shortly, I will transmit to you a traced copy, unless, indeed, you should find the following specification sufficient for your purpose - which I shall assume, unless I hear again from you. I could send tracings of some of our studies, but of none that are not improved in the drawings now in hand.

I suppose a barrack for 10 companies - the building being, by partition walls, divided (transversely) into 10 independent, company, barracks. A transverse entry or passage, 8 feet wide in the (clear), and $32\frac{1}{2}$ feet long between the walls, crosses the building, having on one side a door into a room which is 26' by $32\frac{1}{2}$ ' between the walls: this is the mess room for the company, & at the north should be 10 feet high, at the south 12 ft. high. - Over the mess room is a room of similar dimensions in the 2d story; and another in the 3d story; each, 12 ft high at the north, & 14 ft. high at the South: which two rooms afford ample sleeping space for a full company. In the 2d story, & in the 3d story, a room is taken off the front portion of the passage, being 8 ft by 12 ft, & designed for Sergeants. In the rear of the building, there is a piazza to each story 10 feet wide - a door opens upon this piazza, in the 1st story from the bottom of the passage & also from the back of the mess room - and in the 2d & 3d stories from the back of each of the dormitories.

A small kitchen building stands behind each company barrack, separated by a few feet from the barracks, but united with the kitchen of the adjoining barrack room. This has, in the lower story, a kitchen proper, of about 18' by 18' - a small portion being partitioned off as a store room - and also a washing & ironing room - a narrow passage dividing these two rooms. In the upper (or 2d) story (to which access is obtained by stairs in the passage) there will be four rooms for the washer women, each about 12' by 10'. - In this building, the stories need not be higher than 8 or 9 feet. - To return to the Barracks. There will be a fire place in each room, about opposite the entrance from the passage: three windows looking to the front; & a like number to the rear, counting the doors that open on the piazzas: the windows should be large & high rising nearly to the ceiling - both sashes being provided with weights. Over each door from the passage into the rooms (including the sergeants rooms) there should be an opening of the width of the door & rising from the top of the door lintel nearly to the ceiling - means being provided for opening or shutting these at pleasure. For further ventilation, two considerable openings should be made through the ceiling of the 3d story room into the attic space; and, one quite large, into the same space over the flights of stairs - and over the middle of the attic of each company barrack a ventilater should be opened through the roof. The partition walls dividing

the companies should be carried quite up to the slating of the roof.

It is designed to make the large building entirely fire proof. The lower floor to be of masonry covered with asphalt. To support the second floor, two flat arched (tresses) will be thrown parallel with the front & rear walls, and upon these & the said walls, there will be laid joints of iron, from one to the other of which will be thrown a flat & thin brick arch laid in cement - these spans will be about 6 feet; & the clear lengths of the joints less than 10 feet - the masonry (concrete) over these arches being brought to a common level, maybe covered with asphalt, or with 1½ inch boards nailed to 1½ inch battens. The third floor will be like the second. Over the passages, a brick arch will be thrown from wall to wall. The thrust will thus be counteracted within the length of the building, & transmitted to the ends; and to counteract it there, a small structure, say of two stories, might be erected at each end to afford rooms for company clothing & for the necessary offices. It does not seem necessary to make the floors of the piazzas of 2d & 3d stories fire proof. As being much the cheaper material, and of undoubted durability, it is proposed to construct these barracks & kitchen of bricks - (facing) with the best.

A capacious hospital would undoubtedly be necessary in the upper part of your harbor, but it would seem to me that Governors Island might afford the better site. I send plans made in the Surgeons Generals Department of such buildings; & will you please cause copies to be made of such as you think may be useful returning the plans now sent.

I omitted to mention above that the stairs of the barracks are to be of iron - the "tread" a thin plate very much corrugated - resting on a wrought iron frame: no "risers"

I hope you may find the above of some use: you will, I dare say, be able to improve in many respects. I am very respectfully
Your most Obedt JOS. G. TOTTEN Col & Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department
Washington, 14 August 1847

Engineer Order No. 6. --

The following officers of the Corps of Engineers, will constitute a special board to examine the site of Fort McRee, Pensacola Harbor, & to report a plan & estimate for the protection of the same, viz:

Major W. (illiam) H. Chase.*

Capt. A. (lexander) H. Bowman*

Capt. J. (ohn) G. Barnard.*

The Board will assemble at Pensacola harbor on Monday the 30th of the present month, or as soon thereafter as practicable, & will proceed to an examination of the site of Fort McRee, taking into consideration the changes that have resulted thereto from the closing of the old & the opening of a new channel, between the lagoon & the Gulf of Mexico, & will devise & recommend for adoption & execution, a plan for the preservation of the said site - whether by the erection of works for the protection of the present shores - whether by closing the existing channel & opening the old mouth, or someother channel - or by adopting any other method, which may suggest itself to the Board, as preferable.

A project & detailed estimate for the execution of the proposed works, will accompany the report of the Board, which it is hoped will reach the City of Washington, as early as the 15th of October, in order that it may be submitted to Congress, at the commencement of the next session.

JOS. G. TOTTEN Col
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department
Washington, March (15th) 1848

Col S. Thayer,
Corps of Engineers
Boston, Mass.

Sir,

With a descriptive letter of this date, the Department will forward to the care of Lieut. D. (anville) Leadbetter,* Corps of Engineers, for the use of the Board of Engineers for fortification, & subject to your order, as President of the Board; all the Maps & Charts in the possession of this office, relating to the project for fortifications at Sandy Hook.-Very respectfully Your Most Obedt. St.

JOSEPH G. TOTTEN Col
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Thomas W. Ward*

(April 8, 1848)

Col. S. Thayer, New York, in account current with
Baring Brothers & Co.

Dr.

Cr.

1845
Decr 31 to balance of
former account 1 18 "

1847
Decr 31 By balance at
Debit of new account
£ 2 " "

1847
Decr. 31 to Interest on
Do. c 5% to date " 2 "

£ 2 " "
=====

E E

Forwd. by T. W. Ward
Boston

London 31 December 1847,

BARING BROTHERS & CO

Col. S. Thayer
New York -

Sir,

Please pay to Messrs Goodhue & Co. New York, ten Dollars
& 4/100ths in settlement of the balance of the above _____
due from you to Messrs Baring Brothers & Co London, with
accruing Interest

Boston March 6, 1848

Boston, April 8 - 1848

Recd of Col. S. Thayer Ten Dollars & 04/100ths in full
of *£2* - balce of this _____

Baring Brothers & Co

T W WARD

Atty

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department
Washington July 10th 1848

The following memorandum of Engineer Orders & other orders relating to the Corps of Engineers issued in the month of June 1848 is transmitted for the information of the Corps.

June 1. - Engr Order No 8 - Announcing the death of Capt. Geo. L. Welcker,* at Savannah, on the 24th May 1848.

June 6 - Engr Order No 9 - Promotions in Engineers (Compy)

June 7 - Engr Order No 10 - 2d Lt Chas. E. Blunt* relieved from duty as assistant to BvCol Thayer & ordered to report as Asst to BvCol (Joseph K.) Mansfield*, Boston harbor -

June 15 - Lt. (Walter H.?) Stevens* to repair to Bucksport, Me, & remain there until further orders.

June 23 - Engr Order No 11 - Capt J. (ohn) G. Barnard* having been relieved from duty in Mexico to resume charge of defensive works in Louisiana - relieving Lieut. Henry L. Smith.*

June 26 - Engr Order No 12 - Capt. G(eorge) W. Cullum* assigned to command of Engr Compy - West Point - command to date from 22d June -

June 28 - Engr Order No 13 - Lieut P.(ierre) G. T. Beauregard* to take charge of repairs of Forts Pike & Wood and Battery Bienvenue & Tower Dupres - relieving Capt Barnard

June (6) - Special Order No 49 - Leave of absence to Capt. (George) Dutton* from 1t July till Sept. 30th 1848, and, for the benefit of his health to 1st Lieut. Henry L. Smith, from 1t July till Nov 1t 1848

June 27 - Special Orders No 59 - Leave of absence to Capt A.(lexander)H. Bowman* from 5t July till 25t Oct 1848.

JOS. G. TOTTEN Col
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Orange Clark*

(August 8, 1848)

Col. Thayer

Sir -

This will reach you by the hand of Augustus Richards* Esq. of whom I spake to you & whose Father, the late Joseph Richards* of Braintree you knew - Any aid you may be able to extend to Mr. R. by your influence or friendship will be well bestowed in promoting modest merit & will be gratefully appreciated both by him & myself -

I remain, Sir, with the the highest respect & consideration, truly Yours -

ORANGE CLARK
Rector of Christ Church
Quincy

August 8th 1848

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department Washington
September 13th 1848

Engineer Order No 22

I. The President (James K. Polk)* having directed that a joint board of Naval Engineer Officers should be constituted for the purpose of making an examination of the Coast of the U. States laying on the Pacific Ocean, with reference to points of defence & occupation for Naval & Military purposes, & for the security of trade & commerce: the following officers of Engineers are hereby detailed for service on said board - namely Majors W. (illiam) H. Chase* & C. (ornelius) A. Ogden* & 1st Lieut D (anville) Leadbetter* - after being relieved from their present duties as herein-after specified, they will severally proceed to this place - arriving here by the 15th day of November next - for the purpose of receiving further & final instructions - Means will be provided for their transportation to Chagres in company with the Naval members of the same commission: and it is expected that on their arrival at Panama, or soon after, they will find a steamer in which to proceed to the Harbor of San Francisco - While awaiting at that place the arrival of the Massachusetts, or some other vessel, designed to be put at the disposition of the Board in making the examination of the Coast, time may be afforded for making the necessary Explorations of that Bay.

II. Maj. Chase is hereby relieved as Member of the Board of Engineers for fortifications on the Atlantic Coast.

III. Brevet Major (Pierre G. F.) Beauregard*, Corps of Engineers will, on or before the 1st Nov next relieve Major Chase of charge of all Engineer operations in pensacola Harbor.

IV. Bt Col R (obert) E Lee* will, on or before the 15th Nov next relieve Major Ogden of the charge of all operations (at (Sollers point))¹.

V. Capt. W. (illiam) D. Frazer* will, at the expiration of his leave of absence, namely on the 18th of October next, relieve Lt. Leadbetter from the special duty on which he has been engaged in the City of New York and at Governors Island.

VI. Engineer Order No 13 dated June 28th 1848 directing the turning over of Forts Wood, Pike, Battery Bienvenue & Tower Dupres to Lieut. Beauregard, is hereby rescinded: these works are considered as in charge of Capt (John G.) Barnard* to whom they were directed to be turned over by Lt H. (enry) L. Smith* by Engr Order No. 11 of June 23.

VII. As soon as 1st Lieut. J. (eremy) F. Gilmers'* services can be spared by Bvt. Col. R. E. Lee from the special duty in which he is now engaged he will relieve Bt Major

I. (saac) I. Stevens* of the charge of Fort Pulaski & Fort Jackson Savannah River; and if necessary will proceed, in the first place, to Bucksport, Maine, to receive from Major Stevens papers, funds, & other property pertaining to the works & will commence operations as soon thereafter as practicable.

VIII. As soon as Lt. M. (asillon) Harrison* can in like manner be dispensed with by Col. Lee, he will repair to New York & report himself as Assistant to Maj (Richard) Delafield*.

IX. On the 1st of October Lieuts. W. (illiam) P. Trowbridge*, (James C.) Duane*, & (Rufus A.) Roys* will report to the

Superintendent of the Military Academy, the first as Assistant in the Department of Philosophy with a view to Employment in the Observatory, the other two for duty under Capt (George) Cullum* with the Engineer Company.

X. All officers relieved by the above orders from charge of works will turn over the papers, funds, property of every description together with all instructions pertaining thereto & they will communicate every kind of information that may tend to the advantageous prosecution of labor by their Successors. JOS. G. TOTTEN Bt Brig Genl & Chf Engr

*See Index

¹ According to Cullum's Register, Lee replaced Ogden at Fort Carroll, in the Patapsco River, 8 miles below Baltimore.

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department Washington
27th October 1848

Bvt. Col. S. Thayer
Corps of Engineers
Boston, Mass.

Sir,

On the 8th of September, you were informed, from this Department, that "the Board of Engineers will make an Examination during the coming winter, of the coast of East & West Florida, from Amelia Island around to Pensacola Bay; not including the latter, which has been comprised in previous examinations."

No acknowledgement of this letter having been received from you, the Department is in doubt as to its reception. If it has reached you, will you be good enough to inform us thereof. I have the honor to be very Respectfully Your
Most Obdt JOS. G. TOTTEN Bt Brig Genl & Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Washington, 20th November 1848

My dear Colonel

The Secretary of War (William L. Marcy)* is, I am told, anxious to obtain all the information he can obtain touching the assignment of staff-officers to their brevets. It is understood that the amicable suit of the government in your case had a bearing upon the rights and privileges of Brevet rank - if so, will you be good enough to put me in the way of obtaining all the information that it offers. I should like a copy of the opinion of the Court, or if printed a reference to the work in which it is to be found - As Col. (Joseph K. F.) Mansfield* is interested in the matter he would doubtless relieve you of the trouble therein if you will point out the way. All necessary expense will of course be borne by this office. We should have the information at once. Please show this letter to the Colonel.

Very respectfully & truly yours JOS. G. TOTTEN

Col. Thayer.

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department Washington
30th December 1848

Col. S. Thayer
Corps of Engineers
Boston, Ms.

Sir,

Your letter of the 8th inst. notifying this Department that the Board of Engrs. had adjourned Sine die, preparatory to departure in January for the coast of Florida - has been acknowledged.

I have now to inform you that an arrangement has been made with Professor A. (lexander) D. Bache*, Superintendent of the Coast Survey, by which a vessel, the Phoenix, belonging to that service will be put at the disposal of the Board of Engineers for a period of from four to eight weeks from the 10th January proximo. It is expected that she will be ready to receive, at Mobile Point Ala. & sail with, the Board on the day just mentioned; and you are accordingly requested to take the steps necessary for assembling & embarking the Board at that place, on that day, or as soon thereafter as practicable.

Professor Bache will instruct the officer now in charge of the Phoenix, Lieut. Patterson, U. S. Navy, to cause her to be taken to Mobile, there to await the Board; & will request him to engage a Captain & Crew, & to have the vessel provisioned, on account of contingencies of fortifications. Col. (Robert E.) Lee*, as a member of the Board, will be supplied while here with the sum of \$1500 from that fund, to enable him to meet these & other necessary expenditures attending the cruise & exploration of the Board.

On the termination of your examination of the Florida Coast, you will please cause the return of the vessel to the charge & possession of Lieut. Patterson, at such point as he shall have indicated; & also give direction for the discharge of the persons hired. Very respectfully Your most
Obdt JOS. G. TOTTEN Bt Brig Genl & Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department Washington
January 5 1849

Col S. Thayer
Corps of Engrs
Boston

Sir

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2d inst. reporting your inability by reason of ill health to travel, and consequently to take part in the duty of examining the coast of Florida, as required of the Board of Engineers by the letter of this Department of 8th September last.

The Department, while greatly regretting such a cause for your absence from that examination, does not consider your presence indispensable while the board is exploring that part of the coast; and has therefore ordered the other members to proceed to the duty, as a detachment; reporting to you their return from the same, in order to being called together by you for the consideration of unfinished business. A copy of the circular which has this day been sent to the other members is herewith. The arrangements made for the transportation of the board along the Florida coast require that they should proceed thither forthwith, and any other mode of communicating the order would involve considerable loss of time. I am respectfully Your most obt

JOS. G. TOTTON
Bt Brig Genl
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Orange Clark*

Quincy 31st March 1849

Col. S. Thayer

Dear Sir -

I have the honour to inform you that I returned from Washington a week ago last night - I was eminently successful & brought with me the papers necessary to effect a change of Postmasters - I regret that the valuable letter to Col. (William W. S.) Bliss* which you sent did not reach me till since my return - I nevertheless thank you for it - I was presented to the President of the United States (Zachary Taylor)* by my friend the Hon. Abbott Lawrence* whom I found in Washington - I took the liberty to communicate to his Excellency in a private interview which he did me the honor to grant me, the project of a Gen Hospital at San Francisco - He authorized me to say that he greatly approved & desired the measure & added "there is no man in the world more capable than Col. Thayer to project & mature the project" & desired that a copy of the same might be sent to him when you shall have completed it - He spoke of you, Sir, in terms of unqualified respect & esteem - I was delighted with the General & felt not a little honored by the familiar & cordial reception he gave me - I also had the honor of an interview with General (Winfield) Scott* - I am suffering under a severe cold, & during this severe weather, am compelled to keep my house - When I get out I shall honor myself by calling on you at your office.

With the highest respect I remain, Sir, very gratefully
& sincerely yours
O. CLARK
Col S. Thayer, Boston

P.S. It is not known in Quincy that I have been to Washington - The change has created rather a "teapot tempest" here. O. C.

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department Washington
28 July 1849

Col. S. Thayer. Prest. of the Board of Engineers
Corps of Engineers
Boston, Masst

Sir,

You will, as soon as practicable, assemble the Board of Engineers at Fort Adams, Newport Harbor, R. I.; and, in connexion with the examination of the fortifications, the site, the environs, & the plans thereof, the board will consider and report upon the following questions.

1st. Supposing that permanent quarters & Barracks for the accommodation of troops in times of peace, & which may be independent of provisions of that nature already existing in the casemates of the fort, are to be erected on Bretons Point within the public domain and supposing that these are to be, in the first place, sufficient for two companies with their officers, a medical officer, and a field officer in command, but liable to be augmented, in time, so as to receive a Regiment - What is the best position for the officers quarters? What for the barracks? What for any stables, or store houses that may be deemed necessary?

2d. If the board consider that a portion of these accommodations may best be placed within the walls of the fort, what, in this case, would be the answer to the above questions?

3d. The board is not expected to give plans of any of these buildings; but to indicate localities. The opinion of the board is however requested as to the system, in general terms, on which they should be planned - that is to say, considering, comfort, health & convenience, on the one hand, and on the other, economy & the relations of defence, should the buildings be separate, each officers house by itself, & the barrack in several detached buildings - or should the quarters be, to some extent, if not entirely, assembled in blocks, and the barracks be in one or two buildings only?

4th. What is the best position for the Hospital? and is it best that the Medical officers quarters should be connected therewith, or near at hand? or should he participate in the general provisions for officers?

5th Do the relations of efficiency & Defence in the fortifications demand that all or any of these structures placed beyond the walls of the fort be made of combustible materials so that they may be burned on the approach of an enemy?

Lieut. (William S.) Rosecrans*, the local engineer, has been instructed to assist the board in every way in his power - and I transmit herewith, for the information of the board, a letter from him with plans in relation to this subject, all of which the board will please return to this office.

I send also, a copy of my letter to the Secretary of War (George W. Crawford)* on the subject.

It is desirable to have a report from the Board at as early a day as practicable. I have the honor to be very respectfully,
Yr Most Obdt

JOS. G. TOTTEM Bt Brig Genl
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department
Washington 2 August 1849

Bvt. Col. S. Thayer
Corps of Engrs
Boston Mass.

Sir

Your letter of the 30th ult, enclosing drawing & estimate of seawall for the Great Brewster island, is received. _____

The plan is approved & Capt. (Henry W.) Benham* will, by instructions of this date, be ordered to execute it. Very Respy
Sir Yr Mo. Obdt.

JOS. G. TOTTEN
Bt Brig Genl
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Jos. G. Totten*

Engineer Department
Washington August 6 1849

Col. Thayer
Corps of Engrs etc etc

Sir.

I have the honor to acknowledge your letter of the 1st inst. in which you state that you have given notice to the several members of the Bd. of Engrs to meet at Fort Adams Newport R I on the 15 instant to consider the subject lately referred to them by this office: and stating, moreover, the probability that your health will be such as not to permit your joining the Board at that place.

The Department is sorry to hear of the accidents which have caused the disability, and would wish you to abstain from every exertion that might aggravate the injury & retard recovery. It, nevertheless, deems the questions about to come before the board as including very important principles, & leading, possibly, to a precedent, if not a practice, which may touch deeply the defensive system: and is, accordingly, very anxious that the board should have the advantage of your wise counsel & forecast in the matter. Your knowledge of the localities generally, from visits heretofore, with such particulars as the other members will communicate after their examination, will afford a good basis for your opinion on the main points, at least, and enable you, without a visit, to impart great additional weight to the recommendation of the board. I propose therefore, should you be unable to meet them at Fort Adams, that you direct the members to repair, after the examination of all local circumstances, to Boston; there to settle the principles of the Report. I am the rather led to this recommendation, from the fear that the sickness of Col (Robert E.) Lee* may keep him for the duty.

In reference to the general service of the Board of Engineers, from which you suggest that the state of your health might properly lead to your being relieved, I have to say, that I should deem such a change a severe hurt to the public service as connected with duties of that nature; and consequently could not accede thereto, except under circumstances quite imperative. In the mean time - as in respect to the particular duty above mentioned - I do not deem it important that you should be _____ by calls of the board into any personal exposures or trials of health. On the contrary, I have hoped, that you might find an occasional excursion in the way of that duty both pleasant & salutary, while any laborious explorations or journeys might be confided to the other members of the board. I am very Respectfully
Your most
Obt

JOS. G. TOTTEN Bt Brig Genl
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department
Washington 13 August 1849

Bvt. Col. S. Thayer
Corps of Engineers
Boston Mass.

Sir

Enclosed herewith you will find copy of a joint order of the Secretaries of War (George W. Crawford)* & the Navy, (William B. Preston)* constituting a joint Commission of Engineer officers & officers of the Navy for the examination of the dry Dock at Newyork. -

In accordance with the provisions of this order you will detach Maj. (Richard) Delafield* from the Board of Engineers to be assembled at Newport on the 15th, to enable him to obey the order.

Should your own health not permit you to serve on this commission you will detach Bvt. Col (Robert E.) Lee* from the Board, with instructions to take your place on the Commission, the Secretary of War having authorized this substitution; and furnish him with a copy of the order. -- a copy will be sent to Maj. Delafield from this office. I have the honor to be very
Respectfully your most Obedt JOS. G. TOTTEN Bt Brig Genl
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Totten*

Engineer Department
Washington 23 August 1849

Bvt. Col S. Thayer
Corps of Engrs
Boston

Sir

In consequence of the sickness of Bvt. Colonel (Robert E.) Lee*, of which he informs me he has apprised you, I am authorized by the Secretary of War (George W. Crawford)* to place Bvt. Colonel (Joseph K. F.) Mansfield* on the joint Commission for the examination of the Drydock at Newyork - You will accordingly detach Col. M. from the Board of Engrs with instructions similar to those of Col. Lee.-

A telegraphic dispatch of the above import was this day delivered at the office to be forwarded as soon as the wires permit the resumption of operations. Col. Mansfield was also addressed, per telegraph, at Newport R.I.

The Commission is directed to assemble at Newyork on the 25th. I am very Respectfully your Most Obedt

JOS. G. TOTTEN Bt Brig Genl
& Chf Engr

*See Index

FROM Frederick A. Smith*

Engineer Department
Washington. 15th Sept. 1849

Bvt. Col. S. Thayer
Corps of Engineers
Boston, Mass.

Sir,

A Board of Naval officers has been directed to convene at this city on the first of October next, to digest a code of Regulations for the Government of the Naval School at Annapolis.

It is deemed a point of great importance to secure the cooperation of some officer of Engineers who is familiar with the operation of the Regulations of the Military Academy, from personal experience.

Your name having been brought to the attention of the Secretary of War (George W. Crawford),* I have been instructed by him, to state to you, that it would be highly gratifying to the War Department, if the state of your health would permit you to afford the Board the aid of your presence & advice. It is feared your recent illness may be a bar; but your long & brilliant Superintendence of the Military Academy, and intimate acquaintance with the effect of its Regulations, so preeminently qualifying you for this delicate service, must be the excuse of the Department for an urgently expressed desire, that it may not prove insuperable. Be pleased to notify the Dept. at the earliest date, if you will be able to attend to this duty. Very respectfully Your most Obdt. FRED. A. SMITH Capt Engrs A.C.E.
In charge

*See Index

TO Ichabod Chadbourne*

Fort Warren Oct. 20th 1849

My dear friend

On Tuesday last Oct. 16th I recd your Note written from the Adams House Oct. 6th but postmarked Oct. 15th. Had I recd it in due season I would not have failed to call upon you. I was not less surprised than distressed by the information it conveyed with regard to your health. In April when we last met you appeared to enjoy perfect health & so late as August I heard thro our friend General (Sylvester?) Churchill* just from Eastport that you were quite well. I hope & pray that this may prove a false alarm & that you may still live many years enjoying all the blessings ever vouchsafed to man. I shall however feel extreme anxiety & concern till I receive another letter either from you or some member of your family in case you are too feeble to write yourself. Ever your faithful & affectionate friend
S. THAYER
Col. I. R. Chadbourne
Eastport Me.

*See Index

FROM George W. Cullum*

West Point N.Y. Nov. 29th 1849

My dear Colonel

I am much obliged for your kind note of Nov. 26th, returning the enclosed which I again send to you hoping that you will add all the honors which have been conferred upon so worthy a member by various learned societies, with the dates when conferred. I will thank you also to put down the days of the month of your different promotions etc. as I have no means of getting at those dates, prior to 1815, except from the officers themselves.

I enclose you a copy of two specimen pages of the new register, as I design it. The size will be the same as the Army Register. Officers in service to be printed in small capitals, - deceased graduates in Italics & those killed in Battle in heavy faced Italics. Yours truly
GEO. W. CULLUM
Col. S. Thayer
Corps of Engrs

*See Index

FROM Orange Clark*

Quincy, Jan 10th 1850

Col. S. Thayer

Dear Sir-

In accordance with an intimation in my note on the evening of the day of our late interview, I have the honor to inclose to you the Subjoined Copy of a letter from the Hon. Geo. Morey* of Boston which my friends Dr. B(uz)bee* and the Hon. Horace Mann,* procured without my knowledge. It was accompanied with letters still stronger, I am told, from Judge Bigelow*. Hon. Horace Mann & the Hon. Abbott Lawrence* just previous to his departure to England - Those letters are on file in "the Department of the Interior" at Washington - My friend took no copy of any but Mr. Morey's letter, but assured me they were more full & commendatory - the Indian Agency appointment is still pending - I would prefer embarking in the Hospital Enterprise as more honourable, attended with less privations & not more arduous -

Copy

"Hon. Thomas Ewing* Secty etc etc"

"Dr Orange Clark of Quincy is an applicant for the situation of Indian Agent & I have been requested by one of his friends to state what I know of his qualifications for the office - I have known Dr. Clark for a considerable period & I have made particular & very full inquiries respecting him - From my own knowledge, & the information I have derived from others, I am able to say that I consider him a gentleman of very respectable talents, & acquirements, distinguished for his excellent judgement, sound common sense & practical wisdom. He is remarkable for energy, decision & preserverance - His honesty & integrity have never been questioned or doubted - Fidelity & loyalty to his friends are among his strong characteristicks - In fine, I regard him as peculiarly well qualified for the situation he seeks & with great confidence & earnestness I recommend him to the favor of the Department - With great respect, your obedient Servant"

signed George Morey

Perhaps, Sir, modesty would demand a blush in copying for your perusal such a letter as the above But I have got my feelings somewhat enlisted in the noble enterprise of your suggestion, & am anxious to attain such a character in your estimation as may inspire a confidence in me & know not that I can better do it than in the way adopted. Should the drudgery of such an undertaking be confided to me, God helping me, my patrons shall not be disappointed in me. This is all the apology in my power at present to make - I have hitherto given all my time & talents & earnings to the Church but my physical constitution now demands a more active field of usefulness than that of a parish minister & my physicians assure me that such a field of labour is indispensable to a prolonged life of philanthropy in my case - I am happy here & would be glad to end my life with this people, but I believe duty points otherwise - With the highest respect, I remain your Obedient Servant

ORANGE CLARK

Col S. Thayer

Braintree Mass.

*See Index

FROM George W. Cullum*

West Point N. Y. April 10, 1850

My dear Colonel

I find on all the Registers of Graduates of the Military Academy, in my possession, Henry A. Burchstead and Joseph M. Wilcox both put down as "Killed at Fort Mimms 1812." The records of the Adjutant General's Office state that the former "Died Nov. 30, 1813", and the latter was "Killed in Creek Nation Jan. 15. 1814." Can you assist me in reconciling the discrepancies? It strikes me the register must be in error, as the garrison of Fort Mims was a militia force under Major B(easley)y, which was massacred on the 30th August 1813. I have been informed, verbally, that Burchstead was killed by the Red-Stick Indians on the Alabama River, and I find on a memorandum in the Engineer Department that Wilcox was "Killed in Florida" (date not given).

I will take great pleasure in sending you the six copies of the Register when published, which I trust will be soon.

You will much oblige me by a reply to this at your earliest convenience.

I propose adding to your History

"Chief Engineer of the Forces, under command of Bvt. Brig. Gen. (Moses) Porter,* in the Defense of Norfolk Va, in 1814."

Yours very truly

GEO. W. CULLUM
Capt. U. S. Engrs

Col. S. Thayer
Corps of Engrs
Boston Mass.

*See Index

TO Col. Ichabod R. Chadbourne*

Boston 1st May 1850

My dear friend,

The reports which have reached me thro' indirect channels during the past winter respecting your health have been generally encouraging yet I would be unspeakably gratified to be assured of its improvement if only by a single line under your own hand & seal.

But for my continued indifferent health unfitting me to travel I would have the present enquiry in pr (opria) persona.

Your friend

S. THAYER

Col. I. R. Chadbourne

Eastport Me.

*See Index

TO Col. Ichabod Chadbourne*

Fort Warren Boston Harbor
10th May '51 (1851)

My dear Chadbourne.

The time was when your hint would not have been left unimproved. I would have been irresistable. I should have been run away with doubtless abandoning duty to father, mother or country but forty or fifty years makes a world of difference in a man. However, I am very anxious to see you & your daughter on your passage back from Jeanie's Convent. If you will come down it shall be so arranged that your visit will give you no trouble & you shall be back to the city at any hour you may name. If you decide not to come then I shall go up to see you but you must let me know where you stay. Yours as ever

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Fort Warren July 30th '51 (1851)

My dear General,

Yours of the 25th was duly recd. The death of our friend General (Henry A. S.) Dearborn* is deeply lamented as would have been that of a beloved brother. Whenever we met he never failed to speak of you. I am glad to hear that you are about to start on a voyage across the Ocean. Your enjoyment will exceed your most sanguine anticipations. The route you design to take is a good one but you will find it difficult to refrain from seeing many interesting places & objects not embraced in your plan. for instance Athens, Vienna, Dresden & Berlin. There are various combinations that would embrace all these without much cost of money or time. As to your probable expenses I can only refer to my own. In the British isles they were about two pounds per diem, North of the Baltic & in Germany 35 francs & South of the Alps viz Italy, Greece Egypt etc on an average 25 francs. But of course they will vary greatly according as whether you make long stops, whether you speak, or travel with some one who speaks, the language of the country & has some experience of the tricks practiced especially in Italy upon greenhorns.

I hope to see you in Newyork before your departure or if I cannot have that pleasure will write again. Your old friend
S. THAYER
Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

TO Ichabod R. Chadbourne*

Braintree March 6th 1852

My dear friend,

Your favor by Alexander (Chadbourne) dated Feby. 5th did not come to hand till Feby. 29th. It was a welcome messenger. There has been scarcely a day during the past winter on which I did not say to myself "I will write to friend Chadbourne by the next mail. & lo Spring has arrived & found me unfaithful to my promises. As your letter says nothing of your health I infer that it is at least not bad but I hope soon to be assured of it by your son. I have been once to the city since I knew of his arrival but as he did not leave his address at the office I know not where to look for him. I have sent him an invitation (by a note directed to the care of Mr Savage) to visit me here & hope soon to see him. My general health is much as it has been the last year or two but on the whole have suffered less from colds during the past winter owing to my having taken unwonted precautions. I must not however conceal from you a new trouble with which I am afflicted On my right temple about half an inch from the socket of the eye there has been since last August a small eruption or rather pimple attended with some pain not constant but intermittent. I gave little heed to it untill 5 or 6 weeks ago when at the urgent request of my sister I showed it to the elder Doctor W(arnner) who at once pronounced it a cancer & is treating it as such. What the result will be no man knows but I am endeavoring to prepare my mind for the worst. Remember me kindly to Mrs Chadbourne & your daughter & believe me ever while I live your faithful & affectionate friend S. THAYER
Col. I. R. Chadbourne
Eastport

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Boston April 17th '52 (1852)

My dear General,

If you were to judge by the number & frequency of my letters to you of late you might take me to be a man of leisure but if by their style & manner you might well suppose that that they did not cost me five minutes each & that is somewhere about the time I have been able to spare from my official labors which during the last four months have occupied me not less than from 16 to 18 hours every day sundays excepted. You will better understand this when I state that I have three officers employed in my office on drawings of as many different projects of fortifications for which I have to prepare sketches & most of the calculations. In addition to this I have to answer daily from ten to twenty letters from the War Dept or from officers in charge of Works some of them requiring answers of several pages - all this without the assistance of any person. I keep no copies of my letters of course but I send my letters & instructions through the Bureau at Washington where they are copied. I am today more busy than usual making preparations to leave here next day after tomorrow (April 19th) for the city of Newyork to attend a meeting of the Board of Engr. How long I shall be kept there is difficult to calculate. It may be two or three weeks more or less. May I not promise myself the happiness of seeing you there? or must you stay at home to look after your garden.

With best regards to your daughter I am your friend

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Braintree June 10th 1852

My dear dear friend.

Having obtained leave of absence for the improvement of my health I was packing up for a start to the West when I recd. your most welcome letter giving me the first information of your return to the country. On reaching Newyork I found myself to unwell to proceed & have returned to (recruit) but still hope that I shall be able to resume my journey in four or five days. I design to go by the Erie R.R. as far as Elmira & thence to Geneva to pass a day with you if I previously ascertain that you will be at home say next week after Tuesday or Wednesday. Otherwise I would take Geneva in my way returning home. Please answer this by return of mail & state the best mode of conveyance from Elmira to Geneva. As to the proposition of Lt. (Horatio G.) Wright* & other topics I reserve what I have to say till we meet _____ to which I look forward with the most lively pleasure. Your ever faithful & affectionate friend

S. THAYER

Please direct your letter to "South Braintree"
Norfolk Co. Massts.

*See Index

TO Ichabod R. Chadbourne*

Boston July 31st 1852

My dear friend

Yours of June 30th was found on my table yesterday on which day I reached home after an absence of six weeks. I saw your son Alexander at Chicago. He was entirely satisfied with his situation & with reason as well as I could judge from appearances. Chicago is destined to be the greatest city on the Lakes & in the West after Cincinnati & St. Louis. I stopped at Racine Milwaukee, Mackinaw, the Sault of St. Marie & returned by Detroit making a tour thro' the interior of Michigan & then to Sandusky, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Pittsburg & over the Alleghenies to Phila. & home. My health is much improved & the eruption on my right temple has almost entirely disappeared. If nothing unexpected occurs to prevent you will probably see me at Eastport about the 1st of Sept. It was only since my return that I heard of Judge Lincolns death. I well know how much you as well as Mrs. Chadbourne have felt his loss. Ever
truly your friend
S. THAYER

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Boston July 31st. 1852

My dear General,

I reached home last evening in much better health than when I left here or when I parted with you. My tour was most satisfactory at the time & will furnish many agreeable reminiscences for the future. At Elmira I met the rail-road celebrators & accompanied them to Michigan. Was on board the Northern Indiana when she sank a schooner & was herself so much damaged as to be compelled to stop at (Cleveland) to repair. Finding that I could not reach Galena without travelling all night in an open wagon without springs I gave up my project of going to the upper Mississippi & turned my course North stopping at Racine, Milwaukee, Mackinaw & the Sault of St Marie & would have gone up Lake Superior had I found a comfortable conveyance but unfortunately there was none. Thence I came to Detroit & travelled thro the interior to Lansing the Capitol & down the Grand River by Lyons & Ionia to the Grand Rapids which is about 40 miles from Grand Haven at its mouth. Thence to Kalimazoo on the Central R.R. & again to Detroit. Then to Sandusky & thro Springfield, Urbana, & Dayton to Cincinnati & by Zenia (Xenia) & Columbus to (Cleveland), thence to Pittsburg & over the Alleganies to Phila. At Chicago, Racine, Milwaukee, Mackinaw the ^{Sault} of St. Marie, Detroit, Cincinnati, Columbus Pittsburg I met graduates of West Point & there & elsewhere many other old acquaintances. The distances travelled are as follows by rail-roads 2168 miles, by stages & waggons 230 miles - by steamboats 1652 miles - Total 4050 miles in 44 days. Expenses for conveyances = \$82 or about two cents per mile & for subsistence & incidentals, \$84 or near two dollars per diem. I abstain from giving you a description of the country, towns & other objects I have seen inasmuch as you have passed over the same route at a recent period. I will however mention one curious fact. In passing thro' the interior of Michigan I put the question "where were you from" to every citizen of the state whom I met probably to sixty in all & in every instance the answer was "Newyork" mostly the Western part near Geneva & Canandaigua By the way I found Mackinaw the most comfortable place I stopped at The Mission House kept by (Frenk) was all that could be desired. At Phila. I fell in with Major (William H.) Chase* travelling East to spend the warm season with wife & child. I have had much conversation with him and can appreciate him better than heretofore. I think his heart is right. He greatly over estimates his own genius but then that is only a common infirmity.

Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. Swift & the children I mean Sarah, (Jose Williams) & McCree who I suppose are with or near you. The former reminded me of another Sarah who was dear to me. My dear Genl. Let us see & communicate with each other oftenener than heretofore. Ever your friend S. THAYER
Gl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

TO Benjamin (Seaver)

Braintree Decr. 4th 1852

Dear Sir,

Owing to my having been detained at home by a severe illness during the last two weeks & to my letters not having been regularly forwarded to me from my office in the city I recd. only on yesterday your communication of the 27th inviting me to join the city government & the citizens of Boston in the ceremonies appointed for the 30th Nov. ult.

Regretting that I could not be present in person as I was in spirit & tendering my grateful acknowledgements for the honor conferrd upon me by your polite invitation I remain, dear Sir with the highest respect your obliged & obedt. Servt.

S. THAYER

Col. U. S. A.

Hon'ble Benjamin (Seaver)

Mayor

FROM George W. Cullum* (pencilled draft of note apparently
to Thayer)

(1853?)

Dear ---

To aid me in the preparation of correct data for my proposed History of the Military Academy, I, herewith, send you a series of questions which your connection with our Alma Mater will enable you to satisfactorily answer and much oblige a searcher after truth - - Please number your answers the same as the questions to save yourself the trouble of repeating the latter.

Lt. Col. Jas. D. Graham, Top. Engrs, Washington D. C.

Prof. Charles Davies, Fishkill Landing, N. Y.

Major T.(homas) J. Leslie, Paymaster U. S. Army, New York City

Capt. H.(enry) Brewerton, Corps of Engrs. Baltimore Md

Prof. Horace Webster, Principal of Free Academy, New York
City

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Braintree 8th Feby. 1853

My dear Sir,

Your esteemed communication of Jany. 31st. was forwarded to me here by Mr Munro on Saturday Feby. 5th. Since then owing to a lame hand I have been unable to hold a pen. Writing now with some difficulty I intend to be very brief. Nothing could have gladdened me more than did the information that you had undertaken to write the history of our Alma Mater. You are the very man for the work & now is the time. If not taken in hand by you it probably would not be by any other 'till essential facts were lost beyond recovery. God be praised & prosper the noble design! I shall of course furnish the information you desire so far as I am able except such as you can obtain from other & better sources. I deem myself tolerably well posted up as to the history of the Academy from its first establishment. Nevertheless direct testimony is always better than hearsay evidence and many witnesses better than one. You will accordingly elicit facts & information from all quarters & then compare. Where all agree that agrument will settle the question. Where there is disagreement or deficiency of information I would cheerfully do my best to reconcile the one or supply the other as the case may be. On one point especially I desire you would apply to others for the requisite information. A Doctor who has cured a disease may well be suspected of exaggerating the danger of the patient & the difficulties of the case. I allude to the condition of the Academy as to instruction & discipline at the time I took charge of it in 1817 The best witness were he living would be (No 91) G.(eorge) W. Gardiner. Next to him is perhaps Lt. Col James W. (D.) Graham* Topo. Engr. who was my first permanent Adjutant & was at West Point from the resuscitation of the Academy in 1813 to 1819 a period of six years. Since then I have rarely met him & know not what are his views & opinions in the premises but I do well know that he is one of the most conscientious & honorable of men & that nothing on earth could induce him to say aught that he did not know or believe to be the truth. You are at liberty to say if you think it best that I referred you to him I might also refer you to Major (Thomas J.) Leslie,* Horace Webster* Bt. Brig. Genl. (Ethan A.) Hitchcock,* Capt. Andrew Talcott,* Capt. (Henry) Brewerton* Edward D. Mansfield* & many others whose names I need not mention as they will readily occur to you. Not one of them, I am sure, will be under any influence or bias in what they may say by love or hatred, jealousy or envy or other evil passions which so often warp the feelings & opinions of men & disguise or pervert the truth of history. At all events they must be deemed the most impartial Judges from whose verdict there is no appeal. While you are collecting materials & procuring information from others I will employ my leisure moments in making memoranda & Notes which shall be forwarded to you from time to time. I will also soon begin to examine your Register with care which I have not yet done & may find some emendations to suggest. At the first glance I perceived numberless blank dates all or nearly all of which I am quite sure you will be able to fill up. The only important omission I have yet observed is in reference to Col (William) McRee* in not stating that he commanded the Artillery attached to the Northern Army under Genl. (Wade) Hampton in the Campaign of 1813. There were I believe four Companies or Batteries constituting a Battalion under his command besides a siege train. I can now only name the Captains of three of the Companies. They were Brooks, Churchill & Lomax, The other was, I think, McKeon, -

There is a trifling error in my own appendage. My degree of A.M. at Harvard was conferred in 1825 instead of 1811 as there stated. The error was of course my own. If you think my tail is not already too long & conspicuous & out of all proportion to the body & head you may add another L.L.D. It was conferred by Harvard University in 1851. On the publication of the Register I requested the favor of eight copies. Six only were recd. I would be glad to have the two wanting if they can be spared.

I reproach myself for not having written at the proper time to congratulate you on your return to the country & to duty in improved health. I thought of doing so often but put it off till it was too late as I am want to do when it is a question to write a letter. We have not always, I suppose, been able to think alike in professional matters as rarely two independent minds can, but the truth is I feel warmly towards you & always have since I knew you as a Cadet. With sincere regard I remain
your obedt Servt
S. THAYER
Captain George W. Cullum
U. S. Engineers

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Braintree 11th Feby. 1853

My dear Sir,

In my hastily written communication of the 8th I forgot to say that in making the Notes I promised to furnish I shall assume unless otherwise advised that you will have procured from other sources & will have before you to be referred to if need be in writing your history the following among other documents & papers viz. 1st The several acts of Congress & all other printed Congressional documents relating to the Academy including "Document 79 House of Rep. 21st. Congress 1st. Session War Dept" containing the names of the Cadets appointed each year from 1800 to 1829 inclusive etc etc.

2d. All the Reports of the Boards of Visitors from the first in 1818. I have only nine of those reports viz for 1824 & from 1826 to 1833 inclusive.

3d The printed regulations of the Academy. all the editions. They will give the programs or courses of instruction in each Dept. & the text books used at the periods of publication. I have unfortunately only the last one I had printed viz that of 1832. Can you furnish me with a copy of each earlier edition?

4th. The first triennial Register of Graduates which must have been published I think in 1820 or 1821. I brót a copy with me from West Point but am unable to put my hand upon it.

5th. The Reports of the Secy. of War & Presidents Messages in which the Academy is mentioned. You have of course the Registers of Cadets printed annually since 1819 inclusive

I avail myself of this occasion to ask answers to several questions suggested by the perusal of several of the first pages of your Register - Why was the name of Jonathan Williams omitted. I say omitted because it was on previous Registers. Altho' not a graduate he was an officer & the most illustrious one ever connected with the Institution. One to whom the Alma Mater & her sons owe a greater debt of gratitude than is due to any other individual.

Why are Swift & Armistead named among the Inspectors of the Academy? If they were ever such I think I must have been ignorant of the fact or I must acknowledge that my memory is very treacherous.

Why is Swift named (No 1 page 51) "Director of the Academy from 31 July 1812 to 3 Jany 1815" a title not connected I believe with any other name. Whence the title of "Director"? Or is it only meant that he directed the Academy by virtue of his authority as Colonel of the Corps of Engineers & in the sense expressed in the remark under the head "Superintendents" but then please explain why he ceased to direct the Academy on the 3d of Jany. 1815. I ask for information without intending to say or intimate that my questions may not be answered satisfactorily. Other questions occur to me but I must defer them I remain respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engineers

*See Index

- (1) What was the date of your Warrant or Appointment as Cadet & when did you report yourself at West Point
 - (2) Did your pay commence from the date of your Warrant or only from the time you joined the Academy.
 - (3) Were you examined for admission. If not, at what time was the rule for examining Cadets on admission first adopted & carried into full effect
 - (4) When did the Term of study & Instruction begin & end in 1813 & in each succeeding year to July 1817.
 - (5) Were the Cadets encamped in any year prior to 1818. If so, state where, when & how long
 - (6) When were the Cadets first formed into a Battalion of how many companies did it consist & how officered
 - (7) Did the Corps of Cadets make any military excursions or marches while you were a Cadet. If so state when & the routes of march.
 - (8) When was the Corps of Cadets first put in complete uniform & what was the uniform. When was the grey uniform adopted
 - (9) What constituted the Course of instruction at the Academy while you were a Cadet viz. in Maths. Nat. Philosophy, Engineering, French, Drawing, Infantry. Tactics & Artillery. What were the text books & what was the degree (extent or amount) of instruction given in each Department & Branch. What was the duration of the Course & how much time was allotted for study & instruction in each Dept. & Branch.
 - (10) How were the Cadets arranged for instruction. Were there regular classes. If so how many, how formed, how denominated & how passed from a lower to a higher class. Were there regular examinations for that purpose. If so at what times, by & before whom made & were the examinations searching & thorough.
 - (11) Were there examinations for promotion prior to 1817. If so from what time or in what year or years. by & before whom made & were they thorough in all branches of the Course. What degree of proficiency in Mathematics Nat. Philosophy, Engineering, French & Drawing was absolutely required as a Sine qua non to promotion. For instance how many of those promoted from 1813 to 1817 were, probably, able to translate French with facility.
 - (12) What were the incentives to study prior to 1817. Were there merit rolls or Class Reports or any system of recording & reporting the Daily progress of the Cadets. Were promotions made according to merit.
 - (13) When commenced the practice of instructors making weekly class reports exhibiting, by conventional numbers, the merits of the daily recitation.
 - (14) What were the kinds of modes of punishment inflicted on Cadets from 1813 to 1817 & by whom were they awarded & sanctioned. Were there Court Martials or Courts of Enquiry on Cadets in any instance. If so by whom ordered or authorised.
 - (15) When commenced the practice of reporting & recording Delinquencies & of forming rolls of merit in conduct.
 - (16) How were Cadets, prior to 1817, supplied with, subsistence clothing & necessaries & how were the prices regulated & payments made for the same. (a)
 - (17) What were & are your opinions of the new organization of the Academy. and of the new system of administration & government introduced in 1817-18. Were they expedient & judicious. Were their tendencies & effects salutary during your official connection with the institution
- (a) Add. Were there any regulations preventing Cadets from contracting debts or, expending money ad libitum

FROM Richard Delafield* to George W. Cullum*

New York 12th Feby 53. - (1853)

My Dear Cullum

I received your kind favor of the 1st inst by due course of mail and can well understand the difficulties you labor under in obtaining the desired traditinary information in the absence of records.

I will most cheerfully impart to you any information in my possion either of memoranda, or from memory. but to undertake writing all I might have to say under the varied systematic arrangement of heads and queries propounded in your letter, would be equivalent to writing a history of the Institution for thirty years, a task I am incapable of undertaking.

You must come down and spend your time with me in my house so that we may uninterruptedly communicate freely on the subject as you make your notes - and thus by efficient pumping draw out of me all I know about the subject.- Yours
truley

RICHD. DELAFIELD

Captn. Cullum
Corps of Engineers
West Point

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Braintree 14th Feby. 1853

My dear Sir,

Should you have occasion (& I think you will) to communicate with General (Joseph G.) Swift* on subjects connected with your history, a letter directed to him at any time within a month hence should be addressed to the care of his son-in-law Mr. (Peter) Richards* whose house is 116 Remsen Street Brooklyn & whose office is 56 Exchange Place Newyork. He is there with his family on a visit. He is I suppose the only person among the living who was at West Point when the Academy "first saw the light & can therefore probably furnish some essential facts which you might not be able to obtain from any other source. He can tell you all about his mathematical teacher professor or acting professor George Barron whose name was in previous registers but is omitted in yours. He was the senior officer when I joined the Academy in 1807 - left there in December of that year & probably never saw it again untill after its revivification in 1813 or 1814 - I say revivification because you know or will know that after languishing several years it became extinct in 1811. His correspondence with the War Dept from that time till his connection with the Academy was severed by my appointment as Superintendent you should endeavor to see as it would through much light on the condition of the Institution at that period. It would disclose some astounding facts such as compelling Cadets to sit astride cannon for hours & other queer & amusing modes of punishment which were disused only after a reprimand by the President There are other reasons which may be mentioned hereafter why I would wish you to take a peep at this correspondence I have never indeed seen his letters but copies of those addressed by the Dept. were, altho' unasked for, transmitted to me at the time I went to West Point as Superintendent but have been mislaid or destroyed. You were requested in my last, I think, to explain the expression "prior to 1815" on the 1st page of your Register under the head Superintendents. The name of Peter C. L'Enfant* No 13 is entered as professor of mathematics altho he never performed duty as such or even accepted the appointment. I doubt whether any one who declines an appointment is entitled to the honor of a place in the Register or if one be entitled to it why have not all who declined an equal claim to the same. I have not yet commenced my notes but have made some progress in brushing off the dust & cobwebs & scraping the rust off my memory by way of preparation Very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum U.S. Corps of Engineers

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Braintree 17th Feby. '53

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 11th came to hand last evening. That there may be no detention of your letters in Boston for the future I would thank you to direct them to me at South Braintree where there is a post office.

Open your Register page 35 No. 67. Under acting Asst Professors of Nat & Exp. is Jared Mansfields name. Is not that a mistake? I think there was no such Dept at that time. It has ever been my impression that he succeeded George Barron as acting professor of Mathematics. If so, the date of Wm. A. Barrons appointment as acting prof. of Math must also be incorrect. If you would furnish me with a list of such blank dates as you cannot succeed in filling up I might be able, at least in some cases, to say how you might obtain the requisite information. I remain respectfully & truly yours
S. THAYER
Captain Geo. W. Cullum Corps of Engrs.

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TO George W. Cullum*

Braintree 21st Feb'y. 1853

My dear Sir:

I am thankful for your prompt answer to my questions & for the information furnished in your letter of the 17th - the first of the following extracts from Genl. Swift's* letter to you of 10 May 1850 surprised me very much. 1 "Col Williams took the command" & "until 1803 when he resigned on a question of rank & reentered the Corps in 1806". You will probably meet the Genl. in Washington as I hear he is going there. Will you have the kindness to ask the following questions on my part & let me have his answers. Who directed the Academy from the time Col. W. resigned 'till he was reinstated? Did the vacancy created by his resignation remain unfilled during those three years & if not by whom was it filled & how did the new vacancy occur which was filled by Col. W.'s reinstatement? I hope these questions will not embarrass him. They are not designed to do so. I ask for information. I once thought I knew all the facts & circumstances touching the case from having heard them narrated in minute detail by the Col. himself & having seen his correspondence with the War Dept. on the subject. The Col. did tender his resignation. So much is certain. The occasion of it was an order issued by a Captain of Artillery (Izard I think). It was not a question of rank, however (I do not see how there could be any between a Col. & a Capt.) but of a right to command the Post of West Point. My impression was & still is that the resignation was not accepted but withdrawn. If it turns out that it was accepted I think you will find that the Col remained out of service not three years or even three months, perhaps not three weeks & not long enough to be worthy of notice. The facts involved in this question seem to me not unimportant in connection with the history of the Academy & of the Corps & consequently should be investigated & settled now if ever. Are there no registers, or other record of resignations etc* to be found in the Adjt Genls Office or elsewhere in Washington? It would be strange indeed if there were not. Is not Gen'l Gratiot there? or or if not, may you not communicate with him by letter? He was a Cadet from 1804 to 1806 & cannot fail to remember whether Col. W was out of service at any time during that period. Col. Gates also, might if necessary be consulted. There are still other resources if those fail. 2nd. "He (Col. W.) did not reside at West Point after that year (1806) though his family did during the year 1807" The Genl was at W.P. 'till the close of the Term about the end of Nov. 1807. I was there only from the beginning of Sept. Either our recollections differ, or we define the word "reside" in a different manner. I am quite sure that Col. W. was often & much there otherwise my recollections of him as he then was & as you see him on the canvass at W.P., figure, dress, face, expression, attitude, all would not be as vivid as they now are after an elapse of forty six years. I can remember him in connection with many distinct occurrences. Twice I dined with him on one occasion in company with the Genl then Captain Swift. I do not affirm, however, that the Col. was always at W.P. during the period here referred to. That Col. W. did not reside at W.P. after 1807 was not & could not be affirmed by General S. from his own personal knowledge, he being at Boston & never at W.P. again till during or after the War 1812-1815. Fortunately there are some still surviving who were present & can speak from the evidence of their own eyes. Of such I am one. I was at W.P. the whole or a part of every year from 1807 inclusively to 1812 & continuously from Nov. 1809 to May or June 1811, acting either as commandant, Adjutant or an Asst.

Prof. of Math. I can therefore affirm, of my own knowledge, that Col. W. did reside at W. Point after 1807 in the sense in which I understand the word "reside". "Until 1812 the Col. (W.) was fortifying N.Y. Harbor & in the Del. river, etc". True except that I did not know before that he was at any time in the Del. River (que deable voulait-il faire dans ce galère la') or that there was then any work in progress or projected for the defense of that river. Ft. Mifflin having been previously reconstructed. In Genl Totten's letter to you May 14th, '50, he says "He (Col.W) directed in person the fortifications in N.Y. harbor in 1807, 08, 09, 10, 11 & as I think a part of 1812". He speaks with characteristic caution saying only that which come within his own personal knowledge, otherwise he might have said also in 1806, 05, 04 or whatever year the rebuilding of Ft. Columbus was commenced. In reference to the statements of Gens. S. & T. you remark "From the above you see that Doctors disagree tho' one fact is established that Col. W was absent from W.P. from 1807 till he resigned in 1812." No, I honestly confess I do not see the disagreement. Nor can I admit the fact without rejecting the evidence of my own senses. I mean that he was not absent in the sense absent in the sense in which you seem to understand the term in this instance. On the other hand, I concede that he did as alledged, direct in person the fortifications in N. Y. harbor; the term or phrase being taken in its true sense & explained to mean what it was intended to express. Two important charges were confided to him. For both, he was equally responsible. Both he was bound to direct in person to the extent he might deem expedient & practicable. In his swift Cutter called the Engineer he went to & fro' at pleasure, staying at either as long a time as seemed to him necessary & proper in the exercise of a sound discretion. With as much propriety may it be said that he did not direct the one in person or that he did not direct the other in person, or that he was not present at the one or that he was not present at the other. Whether on the whole or in any given year, he was present for a longer time at the one than at the other even if it could be ascertained is outside the question. The Academy, however, was his darling, his favorite child. Whether present or absent his eye was ever directed towards it, All Reports whether weekly or monthly were made to him; all regulations or standing orders of any importance either emanated from him or were issued only after having been approved by him. A house (with suitable appendages) was appropriated to his exclusive use, was handsomly furnished & when unoccupied was still kept in order & ready for his reception. Here he dwelled when present & his family also when not at their permanent residence which was in or near Phil'a. These were the only public quarters here or elsewhere he ever occupied as far as I ever heard or knew. Accordingly I say here was his only military residence & home if he can be said to have had any. When in New York superintending the fortifications in the harbor, lived in a boarding house, Bdway, kept by a Mrs. Wilkinson. At least, I always found him there whenever I call to see him. Whether his family were ever with him in New York or N.Y. Harbor except on a mere visit, I cannot say positively but I think not. If I am wrong in this Genl Totten will know it. With the permission of the War Dept. he built a house near the Battery in Newyork with the intention of occupying it when finished but to the best of my recollection it was never occupied by him, or if it was or phrase being taken in its true sense & explained to mean what it was intended to express. Two important charges were confided to him. For both he was equally responsible. Both he was bound to direct in person to the extent he might deem expedient & practicable. In his swift Cutter called the Engineer he went to & fro' at pleasure, staying at either as long a time as seemed to him necessary & proper in the exercise of a sound discretion. With as much propriety may it be said that he did not direct the one in person or that he did not direct the other in person, or that he was not present at the one or that he was not present at the other. Whether on the whole or in any given year, he was present for a longer time at the one than at the other even if it could be ascertained is outside the question. The Academy, however, was his darling, his favorite child. Whether present or absent his eye was ever directed towards it, All Reports whether weekly or monthly were made to him; all regulations or standing orders of any importance either emanated from him or were issued only after having been approved by him. 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With the permission of the War Dept. he built a house near the Battery in Newyork with the intention of occupying it when finished but to the best of my recollection it was never occupied by him, or if it was

till after the Academy was defunct. In writing the above, my object is not, I assure you to show that Col. W's name was improperly omitted from the Register or to intimate that it ought to be reinstated. On the contrary, I am well satisfied with your reasons for the omission & think you did well to "cut the gordian Knot" as you did. Only I am not sure that you will not find yourself compelled to cut one or two more knots in like manner & for like reasons. Nous verrons. I can well understand the embarrassment you mention & so much the better as it reminded me of my own in reference to the very same matter when I arranged the first register. My embarrassment was this, If I omitted one name I did not see how I could avoid omitting a second for the very same reason & still a third for a yet better reason & then my own name would have stood alone, a monument as some might think, perhaps, of my own arrogance so I decided to do what my judgement did not at the time fully approve & with that confession I come to a close much to your joy, I doubt not You have a plenty for one meal even though you are hungry enough to "manger comme quatre". What I have to say touching Inspectors, Superintendents, etc. is reserved for a future communication. I am very respectfully & truly yours
S. THAYER
Captain George W. Cullum
U. S. Corps of Engineers.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Briantree 23 Feby 1853

My dear Sir,

In your Register page 1st, under "Superintendents" I read "prior to 1815" "the senior officer of the Corps of Engineers present for duty" was, "according to the law of March 16th 1802, the superintendent of the Academy" Without venturing to affirm that such was not the fact I must acknowledge that there is some room for doubt & would therefore feel obliged if you could refer me to the authority upon which the statement was made. You have doubtless examined the records (the order books for the period in question were complete in 1833) & can inform me whether any senior officer below the "next in rank" to "Principal Engineer" ever assumed the title of Superintendent. There were a great many senior officers from first to last who had the immediate but temporary charge of the Academy in the absence of Col. Williams. I can only recall to remind the names of Wadsworth, Macomb, Barron, Armistead, Swift, Gratiot, Partridge & Thayer but there must have been others in the order books. Now if all or any of these assumed the title what would it prove? or what would it fail to prove? Was the senior officer superintendent only in name or was he a real superintendent such as the word now imports & such as the law evidently contemplated. If not the latter then why should he be regarded as superintendent at all. But whatever the fact failed to prove, it would incontestably prove one thing viz. that the law however it might be construed was violated in one way or the other. Either the assumption of the title was illegal or the senior officer was deprived of a right secured to him by law, that of being superintendent in the same sense in which the "principal Engineer" when present was Superintendent. The law makes no distinction. It does not say "next in rank" under the direction of the principal engineer but transfers the office unconditionally, without qualification or restriction & with the office all the rights, powers & immunities pertaining to it in like manner & precisely to the same extent that it confers them on the principal engineer when present. Any other construction would seem to me to be contrary to all the rules governing legal or rather judicial decisions. In saying that the law would have been violated as lastly above specified I of course admitted the undisputed fact that prior to 1815 (& later for aught I know) the Academy was under the direction of the Chief Engineer as well when he was absent as when he was present.

I will now suppose that the senior officer in the absence of the Chief Engineer did not assume the superintendence. What would this prove? I answer two things, in the absence of other rebutting testimony 1st that "the senior officer of Engineers present" was not, in point of fact, superintendent & 2d that he was not so legally as the law was then construed & properly so construed as far as I can see. "The principal engineer, or, in his absence, the next in rank shall have the superintendence of the said Academy" It seems to me that the sense here is as clear as language was capable of making it. "The principal engineer" can be no other than the highest in rank or chief engineer. "next in rank" Who could he be other than the next in rank to the principal engineer. Could any senior officer in the absence of the principal or Chief Engineer for instance a Captain or a Lieutenant who might perchance be only the 10th

or 20th in rank, could he be deemed "the next in rank" I will not say without stretching the law but without a shocking perversion of language. And considering the importance of the charge & the inexperience of the Junior officers at the time the law was framed, was not the restriction a wise one? They who made the law are not the only legislators who have been unable to make laws that would work well & accomplish their object in all time to come, & in this instance too, the time did come when, from unforeseen circumstances, it was imperitively necessary either to change the law or in some way or other to get around it. The government apprehending difficulties in having it changed, did get around it in the same manner as it got around it with reference to the duties of the topo. engineers & as it is in the habit of getting around laws so that this is only one instance of a great many that might be specified. But whether the new construction was or was not in conflict with the letter & spirit of the law I cannot well see that it can with propriety or justice be carried back & made to apply to occurrences long past. an expostfacto construction of a law is of the same nature as an expostfacto law & may be equally unjust & absurd. After all it is possible that my facts are either incorrect or deficient & that my reasoning is unsound In either case I shall feel under obligations if you would be kind enough to point them out & correct them (a)

With best regards to our brother officer in Washington & to Mrs. Totten when you see her I remain respectfully & sincerely
yours

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum

U. S. Corps of Engrs.

(a) without sparing

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TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 25th Feb'y 1853

My dear Sir:

Can you inform me at what time instructions ceased to be given at the Mily Acady (for want of subjects) prior to the War of 1812. There could have been no cadets at West Point in that year. Fanning & Cutbush were not I know & De Russy I think, was not but he can answer for himself. With the exception of two in 1810 no Cadets were admitted after 1809. The No. on the rolls in 1810 was 35 most of whom went through the usual course or completed it in that year. In 1811 there was 18 on the rolls but I am under the impression that most if not all were candidates for promotion & recd little or no instruction in that year. DeRussy or Templeman will probably remember & be able to supply all the facts wanting. Can you tell me also when the wheels were set in motion again? Was it prior to sometime in the Spring of 1813? When was the first winter term at West Point. Was it 1813-14 or 1814-15. Under the old régime you know there was always a winter vacation extending from Nov. to about the beginning of May.

In your Register page 1t, under the title "Superintendents" I read "prior to 1815 the chief Engineer etc." Why should it not read "1817" There is a good reason for it, I suppose, I find Genl Swifts name there but not that of Col. Williams. I do not say that either should be there (on that subject I propose to say something on a future occasion) but why one & not the other? I am desirous of knowing the exact relations of Genl Swift with the Acady & Capt Partridge during the times he was absent between Jan'y 3d, 1815 & July 28th, 1817-Had the former no connection with it except as Inspector. Was he relieved from all responsibility with regard to it, That is to say could he exercise no control over it or interfere with its management in any way & was it understood that he could not both by himself & the War Dept? You have probably investigated the facts & can answer my questions without putting yourself to much trouble. It was mainly with reference to this very matter that in a former letter, I desired you, if you could, to see the correspondence of the Dept. with Genl Swift during the period in question. I remain very respectfully & truly Your Obed't Serv

S. THAYER

Captain Geo W. Cullum
U. S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

TO Ichabod R. Chadbourne*

South Braintree 2d March 1853

My dear friend,

Your esteemed letter of the 24th ult has but just this moment come to hand having been detained several days at my office in Boston. During the present winter I have not visited the city oftener than once a week, partly because no pressing business calls me there & partly owing to the state of my health which is such as to render it imprudent for me to go out in stormy or damp weather. You should have gone South earlier but better late than never. While in Boston on your way I shall call to see you the moment I hear of your arrival. There is no face I like to see better than yours. To look upon it does me almost as much good as did the Jews to look upon the brazen (serpent) altho' it may not heal me or make me young again. If it would I know very well whose son in law I would try to be. I never regret my old age half so much as when I call at No 10 Assylum Street. Upon my word she deserves a magnificent husband. I desire my best regards to your better half hoping soon to see the two halves together & am affectionately ever your old friend

Col. I. (A.) Chadbourne

P. S. The moment you fix on a day for starting write to say as near as you can calculate on what day you will be there & where I can find you

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree, 2d March, 1853

My dear Sir:

My memory, I am aware, is not as reliable now as it once was; still I try to persuade myself that it is not quite so bad as you would naturally infer from my total forgetfulness of the fact (If it were such) that Swift & Armistead were, one or the other, inspectors of the Acad'y during the whole or any part of the period intervening between July 1817 & June 1821 embracing the first four years that the Acad'y was under my Superintendence. On seeing their names in the Register as Inspectors & there being no trace of the fact in my memory I examined the Army Registers & my official communications from the Chief Engineers & from the Dep't to see if they would help me out of my perplexity but they would not. Gen'l Macomb was the first whose name appears in the Register (1823) as Inspector, as he was the first who affixed the title to his signature in any communication addressed to me. He was, moreover, the first, as I have reason to believe, who ever visited West Point in the capacity of Inspector after July 1817. It is barely possible that Armistead did, altho' if he ever did in a single instance, it seems to me I could not have forgotten it. That Swift did not, I know. I venture to affirm it positively & challenge contradiction. Therefore I say respect for him & for the memory of Armistead both distinguished as correct & faithful officers, forbids the supposition that so important a duty as that of Inspector, vastly more important then than it ever was afterwards, would have been totally neglected by the one fifteen months & by the other thirty three months & altogether four years even had such neglect been overlooked & been permitted by the energetic & ever vigilant Secretary (John C.) Calhoun.* Now, in view of the above mentioned facts & circumstances, all concurring & leading to the same conclusions I asked for light & information & was referred to the order of Feb'y 28t 1815. This order standing alone, unsupported by other testimony, is insufficient, I think to establish the fact in question. The order may have been revoked expressly, or, it may have been so indirectly by assigning the General to another office or duty incompatible with that of inspector, or, it might have become a dead letter or null in many conceivable ways. That it was so revoked or annulled prior to July 1817 there is pretty strong evidence mostly of a negative character, to be sure, but not the less conclusive on that account in the absence of stronger evidence to the contrary. For instance, was the Genl inspector & Superintendent at the same time from Nov. 25t 1816 to Jan'y 13t, 1817? Are not those two offices incompatible? Is not their union an absurdity? Whether he could have been inspector during the whole or any part of the period from Jan'y 13t to July 1817 depends on the fact whether he, at the same time, directed the Acad'y. & was held responsible for it. My impression is that he was held responsible. If so then he was not & could not be inspector but by virtue of his office as Chief Engineer. That, I think, is demonstrable but I shall not stop to discuss it here. In fact the history of the Acad'y from 1813 to 1817 is sue generis. It requires a separate investigation & all parts of it should be viewed in connection otherwise much if it could not well be understood. It is altogether a queer history. It is covered with a thick veil. I do not pretend to have fathomed all its mysteries, but as before remarked I have had a peep behind the curtain & may raise it for you to take a look one of these days, should I think it worth while, (revenons) a nos mo⁽ⁿ⁾ntons.

If General Swift was in fact Inspector after July 1817 & was succeeded as such by Armistead there cannot but be evidence of it in the books or files of the Engineer Department. The finding or the failure to find which will of course settle the question. If the evidence be found & if they can stand on the list as you placed them consistently with fact & right It will gratify me exceedingly. I would not for the world pluck a laurel from the brow of either or deprive either of a mark of honor to which he is entitled. In what I have said or may hereafter say on subjects connected with the Acad'y. My only object or motive, unless I deceive myself, has been or will be, to do the little I can to elucidate facts & to "vindicate the truth of history" My paramount desire is that the Register as well as the history may be complete & correct in its facts so that there may be no grounds for reclamations or heart-burnings,- no need of future corrections, no cause for regrets in any quarter & that the book may be, what I doubt not it will be, in all respects such as to reflect credit equally on the industry & talents of its author. With sincere regards I remain

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum,
U. S. Corps of Engineers

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 3d March '53 (1853)

My dear Sir;

In a former communication I gave you my recollections & impressions, generally, with reference to the statement of Gen'l Swift that Col. Williams was out of service from 1803 to 1806 & also with reference to your remark "though one fact is established that Col. Williams was absent from West Point from 1807 'till he resigned in 1812"

While at Washington you will doubtless investigate the matter thoroughly & favor me with the results in due time in compliance with my request. The information I especially desire is indicated by the following questions.

1. Was Col. W. out of service at all; if so, how long & when?
- 2d. Was he absent from W.P. "whole years" or even a single year?
- 3d. Was he not present in the strictist sense more than one year continously between 1802 & 1807?
- 4t. Was he not present continuously many times for a longer period than that during which Genl. Swift was the recognized Superintendent, viz (from 25 Nov. 1816 to 13 Jany 1817) 49 days?
- 5t. Was he not present many times or at least several times in every year? If not, state the year or years in which he was not.
- 6t. Had he not always at W.P. public quarters appropriated to his sole use; kept furnished & generally occupied by himself or family or household? If not state the year or years in which he had not.
- 7t. Had he public quarters elsewhere at any time after 1802? If so state where and when.

It is proper to remark that "year" in the foregoing questions is to be taken in an academical sense & as equivalent to Term, or period during which instruction was given, annually, viz. from May to Nov., inclusively, the winter vacation extending throughout the other months. When all the information that can be furnished on the subject matter shall be before me I shall be prepared to express an opinion as to whether the name of Col. W. should be in the Register & if it should, then under what title. But in presenting my opinions or views on this or any other subject in any former or future communication I desire it to be borne in mind that I submit them only for consideration, humbly, with a due sense of my own fallibility & with all proper respect & deference for the opinions of others who may not agree with me. The same with regard to facts. I state them mostly from memory & with the expectation & desire that they may & will undergo the most rigid scrutiny & be compared with the statements & recollections of others. All the favor I ask & expect is, whenever you discover a discrepancy between any statement or recollection of mine & that of any other, that you will acquaint me with it in order that I may have the priviledges & satisfaction of rectifying any error into which I may have fallen; and what I ask as a favor for myself I might perhaps, also ask as necessary & proper for the attainment of truth.

I fear you begin to regret having given me a pretext for opening the flood gate & giving you more than you contracted for. There is here & there a (l nat) who, altho' naturally taciturn, when he once opens his mouth never knows when to shut it. I feel that I am such when I take a pen to write on subjects connected with West Point. Such is the rush of ideas & reminiscences that I scarcely know where to begin or where or when to stop. However, I mean to amend, Yr, respectfully & truly

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
U. S. Engrs.

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TO George Cullum*

South Braintree 4th March '53 (1853)

My dear sir

The post boy who took my letter of yesterday to the office brot back last evening yours of the 1st. I shall probably see Genl S(wiff) on his return from Washington & will do my best to prevail on him to put his Diary in your hands. I can think of no reason why he should not unless it be that it contains family secrets. In that case he might without unreasonable labor furnish you with extracts containing whatever would be of value for your purpose. If his statement that Co. W(illiams) was out of service from 1803 to 1806 turns out to be erroneous & should he fail to explain so strange a mistake as that would appear considering that he was an officer of the Corps & must have been present at West Point a part of the time at least it would then have to be conceded that there was a "pretty considerable" gap both in his Diary & memory I still persuade myself however that the error was a mere slip of the pen.

Can you tell me whether I can obtain "Congress" letter paper in Newyork? I have tried to find it in Boston but without Success. It suits me better than any I can find here. Respectfully & truly your obedt. Svt
S. THAYER
Captain George (T) Cullum
U. S. Corps of Engrs.

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TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 8th March '53 (1853)

My dear Sir:

By this mornings mail I rec'd your letter of the 5th in reply to mine of Feb'y 28th but do not find therein a single word touching the main point to which all I said was intended to converge. It is therefore, clear that you misconceived my object & purpose, but I am willing to concede that the fault was mine & not yours. I will try again to make myself comprehended altho, perhaps, without better success.

My text was, if I rightly remember, (for I retain no copies of my letters to you) the following extract "Prior to 1815" the Chief Engineer, by order of the President directed the entire administration of the Mil'y Acad'y but in his absence his instructions were executed by the Senior officer of the Corps of Engrs. present for duty who, according to the law of March 16th, 1802 was the Superintendent of the Acad'y".

Now my enquiry related to the correctness of the above. Would not the language necessarily convey to the reader the idea that "the Senior Officer present for duty" was not only according to the law as then interpreted, but also in fact the Superintendent. Will it not? & if it will, is the idea strictly correct or is it more or less erroneus? That is the question and the whole matter. (all the rest is of no practical importance whatsoever) concerning which I would be glad to hear from you whenever you shall find leisure to take up the subject and after you shall have examined the order books to which I referred you & consulted any other documents or authorities within your reach. It is the mere investigation of a fact, neither requiring or admitting of an argument.

Having been present at West Point most of the time from 1806 to 1812 & having myself been one of the senior officers referred to I could not but know & cannot but remember what the fact in question was. There was not, & could not be & can never be any doubt in mind on the subject, any more than there could be whether I was ever at West Point, still I desired that your convictions should be derived from the testimony of others rather than from mine. Your letter is wholly taken up in endeavoring to prove that your construction of the law is the true one. Granted for argument sake with the condition, however, that it shall not be made retrospective so as to contradict facts & present the truth of history. With that condition I am ready to drop the discussion. Indeed I would not have alluded to it in my letter of the 28th Feb'y. but to shew that the primitive interpretation was at least not without plausibility & that Presidents (Thomas) Jefferson* & (James) Madison*, Col. Williams & the Corps of Engrs. of that day were not dolts. I have not proposed to myself to disturb the present construction of the law altho I think I know very well when & how it came in vogue & for what ends. I can have no interest or motive for wishing it to be believed that I & my successors were illegally appointed Superintendents. Whether the modern construction be right or wrong has long since ceased to be a practical or open question. I d'ont intend, therefore, to make an argument "en pure perte" to enter the lists & "break a lance" merely for sport & especially when nothing is to be gained by victory. Nevertheless allow me one word. Your argument turns, at least I think so, upon the meaning of the term "principal Engineer"

I am indeed surprised that there should be any doubt or question as to its meaning. I can only refer you to the Dictionary & to the universal acceptation of the term. If the intention of the law-giver was as I have supposed could he have selected a term more significant more definite, more appropriate, one less liable to be misunderstood or misapplied. If you think he could will you please to name it. And if he had in his eye, as you suppose, "the senior officer of Engineers present for duty" is it not probable that he would have said so in plain terms instead of employing an expression that means a very different thing? To attempt to prove seriously, that "next in rank" to the principal Engineer means the same thing as "the senior Engineer" who may chance to be only the 20th in rank to him & that they are equivalent & convertible terms is a task which I would decline under any circumstances. In that particular as well as in some others, we must I fear agree to differ "toto(c lo)". You ask may not "principal Engineers" be applied to the senior engineer of a Harbor, for instance. Undoubtedly it might if the law had designated the locality but not otherwise. "Principal Engineers" without qualification can only refer to the principal Engineers of the United States as I think. Your other positions, I am compelled to regard as equally untenable but it would be a waste of words to consider them even if time & space permitted. You must not put yourself to any inconvenience in order to answer my letters. I know you will be better employed while in Washington. The news that the fortification bill had passed the ordeal without being killed or even signed was an agreeable surprise. You & (Isaac I.) Stevens* & your co-adjutors if any you had, deserve well of your country. Very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Captain George W. Cullum
U. S. Corps of Engineers
P. S. I enclose a note to Major Stevens.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 13th March '53 (1853)

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 9th has just come to hand & contains matter highly interesting to me. The document you fortunately discovered in the Adj. Genls. office settles the fact of Col. Williams resignation tres bien, "so far, so good" mais Mons it reste encore beaucoup a' faire. This is only one peep behind the veil into the "terra incognita" situated between longitudes 1802 & 1806. Who directed the Academy while Col. Williams was out of service? Who were the Cadets at West Point & who the instructors in each year & all the other details requisite to complete the history of that period? I cannot but think that every important fact may be ascertained & every doubt removed by drawing upon the memories of those who were there at West Point or if not there were officers of the Corps & ought to remember for instance, Swift, Gates, Gratiot, Totten. Have you pumped them all, thoroughly, dry? How can you be at a loss as to Mansfield, was not Genl. Totten with him all the time as Clerk, Secretary etc at Cincinnati & elsewhere from the date of his resignation or rather perhaps from the time of his first promotion 'till his reappointment in 1808. In fact I doubt whether he had ceased to be a member of Col Mansfields family from the time he came to West Point in 1802 or 1803. How is it possible then that should not remember all about him & be able to give you his whole history in connection with W. P. After 1806 I am in "pays de connaissance" & together with others shall be able, I doubt not, to furnish you with every important fact you will need. I enclose herewith my statement of the Cadets admitted, promoted etc from 1802 to 1817 that you may compare it with that of Genl Swift "Feb 4th 1817" & then correct it if you succeed in discovering any errors therein. So far as it regards the promotions, either the Generals statement is very wild or your Register is. Take whichever horn of the dilemma you like best. Let S stand for Swift & C. for Cullum then the comparison is as follows 1801 & '02 S. 2, C. 2 - 1803 S 1, C. 3 - 1804 S 1, C. 2 - 1805 S 3, C. 3 - 1806 S. 5, C. 15 - 1807 S. 7, C. 5 - 1808 S. 3, C. 15 - 1809 S. 5, C. 7 1810 S. 0, C. 0 - 1811 S. 15, C. 19 - 1812 S. 5, C. 18. Total from 1801, 02 to 1812 S. 47, C. 89. Difference = 42 (See table No 2)

1813 S. 6, C 1 - 1814 S 38, C 30 - 1815 S. 30 C. 40 - 1816 S. 20, C. 0 Total from 1813 to 1816 both years inclusive S. 94, C 71. Difference = 23 Aggregate from 1801, & 02 to 1816 S. 141, C. 160. Difference = 19. As to the number of Cadets admitted I shall say nothing now. I took occasion in a former letter to say that I distinctly recollect every Cadet who was at West Point after 1806 (a). & can furnish you with a list of these names etc. I do not affirm however that my statement is perfectly correct & would be glad if it could be made so. It is proper to remark that having no access to the Muster rolls & not being present in the early part of the year 1809. I may have credited to 1808 a very few who, altho appointed in that year, may not have been admitted 'till 1809. There may be similar transfers from 1813 to 1816 as I have only the lists of cadets appointed in each

year. Look up the Muster rolls if you can or refer to some statement shewing the actual number admitted in each year & present. According to the Generals statement there were admitted 1809 S. 51. According to mine T. 7 - 1810 S. 52, T. 2 - 1811 S. 38, T. 0 - 1812 S. 18, T. 0. Total admitted in 1809, 10, 11, 12, S. 158, T. 9. That is to say then General thinks one hundred & fifty eight were admitted in those years. I think there were only nine were admitted. Now here is a difference with a vengeance. Here Doctors do disagree "toto lo" I call upon doctor No 3 to decide With reference to the year 1812. There are on my list 8 Cadets appointed in that year viz. John Wright, Isaac A. Adams, Dana, Allanson, Merchant, John Monroe, Fitzhugh, G. W. Gardiner, & S(pencer) but having the impression that they recd no instruction in that year I arranged them to the year 1813. It is important to ascertain when they were actually admitted & when "the wheels were again set in motion after the Academy had run out". Monroe & Merchant who are still in service & Fitzhugh in Baltimore can answer for themselves & there are a plenty of other graduates who must know all the facts & among the number probably Col. Craig & Col Riply & Genl. Childs. To a certain enquiry in your letter I will advert on a future occasion when I am more at leisure. Very respectfully & truly yours
S. THAYER
Capt. Geo. W. Cullum U. S. Engineers

(a) I mean from 1806 to 1812

* See Index

(No 1)

Tabular statement shewing the number of Cadets admitted at the U. S. Mily. Academy each year from 1802 to 1817 & shewing also the number of the same who were promoted & the time during which the latter were at W. P. as Cadets

Date of Admission	Number Admitted	Number Promoted	Time between Admission & Promotion		
			From	to	Average time
Prior and during					
1802	11	9	2 years	to 4 years	3 years
1803	8	6	1½ "	" 3½ "	3 "
1804	10	8	2 "	2 "	2 "
1805	8	6	1 "	5 "	2 "
1806	10	10	1½ "	4½ "	2½ "
1807	13	10	½ "	3 "	2 "
1808	43	32	1 "	3½ "	2½ "
1809	7	6	1½ "	2½ "	2 "
1810	2	2	2 "	2 "	2 "
1811	none	none			
1812	none	none			
1813	104	73	½ "	6 "	
1814	155	68	1 "	7 "	
1815	47	20	1½ "	5 "	
1816	41	15	1 "	6 "	
Admitted from 1802 to 1812 = 112 of whom were promoted 89					
Admitted 1812 to 1817 = <u>347</u> of whom were promoted <u>176</u>					
Total admitted prior to 1817 459 of whom were promoted 265					
Turn over					

(No. 2)

Tabular Statement shewing the number of Cadets promoted from the U. S. Mily Academy each year from 1802 to 1817 inclusive also the time during which they were at West Point while Cadet:

Date of Admission	No. promoted	Time of continuance at West Point		
		From	to	
1802	2	1 year		1 year
1803	3	1 "		1 "
1804	2	1 "	to 2 yrs.	1½ "
1805	3	1 "	" 2½ "	2 "
1806	15	1½ "	" 3½ "	2½ "
1807	5	1½ "	" 2½ "	2 "
1808	15	½ "	" 2½ "	1 ¾
1809	7	1 "	" 1 "	1 "
1810	None			
1811	19	2 "	" 4½ "	3 "
1812	18 (1)	2 "	" 5 "	3 ¾
1813	1	½ "	" "	½ "
1814	30			1 "
1815	40	1 "	" 2 "	1 ⅔
1817	19	(Four were at W.P. four years.)		3 "

Promoted from 1802 to 1812 = 89

" " 1813 to 1817 90

Total 179

(1) graduated in 1811

(No 3)

Tabular Statement shewing the greatest number of Cadets at the Academy. at any time in each year & the probable average No. during the year from 1802 to 1817

<u>Year</u>	<u>Greatest number</u>	<u>Average No.</u>
1802	9	6
1803	10	7
1804	15	12
1805	18	15
1806	24	20
1807	28	24
1808	36	30
1809	36	32
1810	36	34
1811	18	
1812	None	
1813	104	100
1814	220	180
1815	220	200
1816	220	200

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 14th March 1853

My dear sir,

In view of Major Leslie's testimony & in the absence of all evidence to the contrary, it may be assumed as an established fact, I suppose, that the first Winter Term at the Academy was not earlier than 1815, 16. But if there be any doubt on the subject there is an easy way of removing it & at the same time of eliciting many other & probably all the facts wanting especially so far as relates to studies, text books & instruction from 1812 to 1817. A series of questions best calculated for the purpose & addressed to each & all of the surviving Cadets who were at West Point at any time during the period could not fail to bring to light every important fact. I cannot see how in any other way you are to obtain the requisite materials for your history. Compare all the statements & wherever there is a discrepancy, let it be investigated till the truth comes out. All this will require time but I hope you have made up your mind not to publish the history in a hurry nor until you shall have exhausted every source of information.

Are there not in the Adjutant General's office or elsewhere data for making out a correct List of the appointments, promotions etc in the Corps of Engineers from the beginning up to 1815. If there be I would request you to have it made out at my expense.

Doctor Walsh heads the list of Surgeons in your Register. You are doubtless aware that he was not the first Surgeon at the Academy & that the situation was never vacant. At least such is my impression. I found Doctor Watson (senior) there in 1807. His brother succeeded him & was the immediate predecessor of Doctor Walsh, I think,

With reference to the situations I filled at West Point prior to 1817 I do not wish to have them noticed in the Register for two reasons. 1st. Because similar situations were filled by others who cannot be credited with them for want of the necessary data & 2d. because my vanity is sufficiently gratified by what is already on the record. If every public situation I have filled every society of which I am a member & every honor of which I have been the unworthy recipient were added to the list, I would have the shame of engrossing an entire page to myself & would certainly dare to look at it. In every similar case it seems to me it would be better to omit all minor distinctions & honors. For instance I doubt much whether Genl. Swift would wish to figure as Superintendent for Forty Eight days, or whether genl. Totten would wish to have it blazoned that he was once a member of the Board of Visitors to the Military Academy. This would be very well to be tacked on to a man who had no tail at all or at most a very short one as in the case of Adam Larrabee. I remain very respectfully
& truly yours
S. THAYER

Captain George W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engineers

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 16th March '53 (1853)

My dear sir,

Your interesting letters of the 10th & 11th under the same envelope were duly received. In that of the 10th you say "On passing, however, I would remark that if the Army Register is to be taken as superior authority you (I) would be only commanding at West Point & not superintendent of the Academy 'till 1822 instead of 1817" etc Very well set me down, accordingly, as only commanding until it be proven that I was something else & by the same rule let Swift & Armistead not be recognized as Inspectors till it be proven that they were such. Apply the same rate to all & I am content. The cases are not parallel however in one important particular. I was not in correspondence with the Adjutant General. He would naturally long remain ignorant of my true position at West Point unless accidentally informed of it. How he came to discover it at last I know not. Certainly he did not & never would 'till Doomsday, thro' me. But if my office, instead of being 300 miles off, had been at Washington & in the same building with & next door to that of the Adjutant Gen.l. I think it quite likely that the fact in spite of myself & in spite of myself would have leaked out & come to his knowledge long before it did. And accordingly If Genl. S. & Col A. were really Inspectors or deemed themselves such, I cannot but think that the fact would have contrived to find its way into the Register ere four entire years had expired. But let it be remembered that the phrase "superior authority" is of your own "coinage", not mine. The omission in the Register was referred to, not as "superior authority" or any authority at all, but merely as one of the reasons why the fact in question, if indeed it were a fact, (which I did not admit) had escaped my memory. Nevertheless, altho' I did not refer to the Register with the view you supposed I do think that it goes to corroborate the other evidence on the same side altho the latter, being sufficient of itself, needs no extraneous or collateral supports.

You say "The failure of Genl. S. & Col A. to visit the Academy I do not pretend to account for" There is but one way of accounting for it unless you are prepared to charge both those distinguished officers with gross neglect of their most important duty & not only them but also to charge the Secretaries of War (George) Graham* & (John C.) Calhoun* with a not less culpable neglect in conniving therein or rather permitting such neglect Take either "horn" There is no other alternative, as I think. Your silence under the circumstances must be taken as an admission that you have not been able to find in the Engineer Dept. or elsewhere any record or other evidence that Col. Armistead or Genl. Swift after July 1817 ever discharged the duty of Inspector even in a solitary instance during the four years in question; that either ever affixed the title to his signature; or assumed it in any manner or on any occasion Now if all these are admitted facts, can you expect to convince any one (I do not mean here to include yourself because I am not absolutely certain that your mind, owing to a very natural & therefore excusable prepossession, is open to conviction) that S. & A. were Inspectors, without a particle of other evidence than that afforded by the order of Feby. 28th 1815. In a former communication I said that the order may have been abrogated or annulled in many ways, as for instance 1st directly, by a subsequent order of which the record is not preserved 2^d indirectly but not the less effectively as follows. 1t. by becoming obsolete from disuse. - 2d. by assigning Genl. Swift to some Post or office incompatible with

that of Inspector - 3d or by a change in the organization of the Academy whereby the duties of the Inspector as prescribed in said order are transferred to the officer designated by the President to be the permanent Superintendent of the Academy & detached from the command of the Chief Engineer for that special duty. That July 28th 1817 was the epoch of such a change I had supposed was known to all & especially to the officers of Engineers. Should it be denied however by any one competent to deny the fact I shall be prepared to prove it documents in hand, You say, "it strikes me that the Chief of the Corps is ipso facto the inspector of all that pertains to his command" very true, If I admit your premises I must of course assent to your conclusion. But I don't admit your premises. Ask Genl. Swift whether the Military Academy after July 1817 was in fact under his command or whether he directed it, interfered with it, or exercised any control over it in any way & he will tell you no. Do you want any better authority?

You seem inclined to think that Genl. Macomb derived his authority as Inspector from the order of 1815. The Genl. was, to be sure, a famous grabber, equally so with his pupil & imitator Genl. Wool; but he was too discreet & had too vigilant an eye over him. to venture on such a step as that of reviving an obsolete or a virtually rescinded order & extracting therefrom little more than the title. without assuming the most important duties which that order imposed. The inspectorships of 1815 & of Genl. Macomb altho having the same name were very different offices & imposed very different duties as will appear by comparing the order with the first clause of the Academic Regulations.

I am very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum

U.S. Corps of Engineers

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 18th March '53 (1853)

My dear sir,

My remarks of yesterday were confined to the inspectorship from July 1817 to July 1833. In what relations Genl. Totten stands to the Academy now I neither know or care to know but of this I can assure you - If any Chief Engineer, Inspector or other officer at any time while I was Superintendent had come to West Point & assumed the Superintence or otherwise interfered with government or management of the Academy, he would indubitably have found himself in limbo quicker than you can say "Jack Robinson" That is, he would have been arrested & tried for "disobedience of orders & contempt of Authority" & sentenced to be cashiered as was Captain Partridge & for the very same ~~reason~~ act. Genl. Swift if asked would tell you that he would not have ventured. If he would not, assuredly none of his successors would; What were the relations of Genl. Swift & Captain Partridge to the Acady & to each other I shall leave for them & you to settle taking little interest in the matter & not deeming myself the best authority. I may only have something to say in case you encounter some tough knot which are unable to untie without my aid. As to gordian knots to be cut there should be few or none. I will only remark "en passant" that whether an officer can be Superintendent & Inspector at the same time is a question with regard to which Doctors may perhaps disagree. I have already expressed my own views on the subject. The two offices seem to me utterly incompatible. The idea of their union exists, in spite of me, my useable muscles.

What is the office of an inspector-general or any other inspector acting within his proper sphere as such? Is it not simply to inspect? - to see - to look into; what?

into himself? - into his own abuses & malfeasances & then to report himself all right. "I have been a very good boy, sir," really? really? I had always entertained the notion that an Inspector acting as such looked into the deeds & misdeeds of others. - into that for which he was not himself responsible, & made report of the result to his Superior; and in fine that he was the eye only & not the arm. I would further remark "en passant" that if Genl. Swift actually discharged the duties prescribed in the order of Feby. 28th 1815 I could not regard Captain Partridge as the real Superintendent at any time after that date, he not having performed the appropriate duties of the office such as must have been contemplated by the law which ordains that "the principal engineer, and, in his absence the next in rank, shall have the superintendence of the said Academy" He was not Superintendent in the same sense that Col Williams, Genl. Swift, myself (& also those who succeeded me, as far as I know,) were Superintendents, the powers & duties & of course the offices were different; now the historian, statistician or other author who calls different things by the same name, without properly explaining the differences leads his readers into error whether designedly so or not.

Genl. Swift was "Director of the Mily Academy" (see Register No 1) until 3d Jany 1815 & to that time only; but still continues to be "responsible for the correct progress of the Institution" from & after Feby. 28t 1815. Here we see responsibility without corresponding power. Again, in your opinion "ipso facto" the Academy "pertains to his (Genl. Swifts) command" while at the same time he has no power to direct it. Here are some seeming inconsistencies which, you will be able to explain altho' I cannot.

I have now done with the inspectorship & conclude by remarking, or rather repeating, that I take no other interest in the question than I always must take in the course of truth. If the names of Swift & Armistead can stand as they were in the Register without falsifying history-tant mieux but I dont see how they can as the evidence now stands. In a statistical work like the Register of the Mily Acady there should be no questionable facts, at least unless they are so stated.

As to the superintendence it opens too wide a field to be entered upon for the present; besides sufficient facts are not yet collected. I remain very respectfully truly yours

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engineers

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 19th March 1853

My dear Sir:

With reference to your answers (11th March) to my queries touching Col. Williams I have to say that neither those or any other enquiries I have made at any time were intended to express or intimate views or opinions in the premises & any suppositions that they were so intended are entirely gratuitous & without foundation & any arguments advanced to refute such supposed opinions are only so many words thrown away "en pure porte". The sole object was to elicit statements & recollections from the few survivors who were at West Point at any time prior to 1811 or 1812 in order that they might be compared & any discrepancies found therein be reconciled by mutual explanations as I doubt not they would be atleast as to important facts. It now belongs to you to bring about this desirable interchange of views & recollections so necessary to the ascertainment of the truth in which, I trust, you take as much interest as I or any other can. It is only after every ascertainable & pertinent fact shall have been established by a general concurrence of those who are competent to testify that I would be willing to express decided & definitive opinions in the premises. Until then I intend to keep my mind open to conviction. May I not take the liberty to recommend a similar reserve on your part? I hope these preliminary remarks will not be deemed out of place altho' most of them are little more than mere repetitions of what I have said in former letters. To return to the queries 1st. query. Your answer to this was to the point & leaves nothing to be desired 2nd query. The answer is not (ad rem) It presupposes that I wished to know whether Col. W. was present during the time he was out of service. I did not care to know that 'pon honor - 3rd query. Your answer furnishes only a very small part of the information desired but the rest will come, I hope, in due time. With reference to the "gap from 1803 to 1815" it seems to me it would be better to reserve our opinions 'till all the facts are before us. 4th. The information is here again deficient & the little there is seems more or less vague & indefinite. Gen'l. Gratiot was, I know, Commandant from June 1810 to sometime in the Spring of 1811. After Nov. 1810 it being vacation there was of course no Academy to superintend. Whether, from June to Nov. he was the real Superintendent or only so called from courtesy is a question which it would be out of place here to discuss. The Genl. & I will not I am sure disagree as to facts nor do I think we would in any other respects after mutual explanations between us. If the Genl is in Washington will you do me the favor to shew him this letter or such portions of it as concern him. Our official relations while he was the Chief of the Corps were not always, I am sorry to say, of the most pleasant kind, but I can say in all sincerity that I have long since buried the hatchet & with it all recollection of any grievences I may have had whether real or supposed, & should we ever meet again I would greet him as a brother. 5th query. The answer to this needs no remark. 6th query. This is not answered either wholly or "partially" as far as I can see. The questions of Genl Gratiot, altho' they have no bearing upon it, I will answer with pleasure. "Who occupied the Superintendent's quarters in the Winter of 1810-11? Were not the two Partridges, Gratiot, Thayer, Chouteau, Wood, etc., in those and adjacent quarters? By Superintendents' is meant, I presume, Col. William's quarters. Chouteau had been

then four years out of service (see your Register) & of course, could not have been there. The two Partridges were not there. Alden was at Norwich Vt. where he always was during the Vacations, William and I roomed together in a small house not far from, but not "adjacent" to the Superintendents quarters. Willard occupied a room in the same building & perhaps Wood but of that I am not sure. Gratiot, I dare say, can locate himself without my aid. From these questions propounded at your suggestion doubtless, it is evident you had lost sight of two things which I endeavored to impress upon you in former letters 1st That in speaking of the Academy or of the presence of Col. Wms. I referred only to the Academic term occupying little more than half of the year; the remainder of the year being regarded as a non-entity so far as the Academy is concerned. 2nd, After 1810 the Academy if not absolutely defunct, was rapidly approaching that state & indeed reached it sometime in the course of 1811, so that Col. Williams presence could scarcely be necessary at any time in that year. Whether Col. W. in the Winter of 1810-11 had removed his furniture & given up his quarters or whether he permitted one or two officers to occupy a portion of them for the Winter I have no occasion to say if I remembered, because the question, however answered, is of no sort of consequence in any point of view. "Was not Col. Thayer the Adjutant of Genl Gratiot"? Such is my recollection. The right of Genl. G. whether he was Superdt or whether he were only Commdt. to appoint his own acting Adjutant is beyond all question. Query, 7th. Your answer to this adds little to my previous stock of knowledge on the subject but in lieu of facts it furnished a capital argument, aimed, it is true, at a phantom of your own imagination. Wishing to remain an impartial spectator I must take care not to mingle in the fray. The warmth with which you pressed the point might, possibly, lead some, less well acquainted with you than I am, to suspect that you were fearful lest some fact might creep out that would be likely to upset a favorite opinion of yours. I cannot believe however that you will make it a point of honor to maintain such opinion at all hazards or that you will cling to it with unreasonable pertinacity. Should that opinion turn out to be erroneous no blame could attach to you. I hear that Major (Isaac I.) Stevens* is appointed Governor of Washington Territory. I sincerely congratulate him thereon, provided he is not under the necessity of resigning his Commission as an officer of the Corps which I would deeply regret & fear that he might someday or other. Politics is a poor business as a profession. I remain very respectfully, etc.

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 24th March 1853

My dear Sir:

In replying to your letter of the 9th March, I omitted in my haste to advert as I intended to the following passage in answer to my enquiry "What time instruction ceased to be given at the Mily. Acady. (for want of subjects) prior to the War of 1812" &C "All I (Capt C.) can at present state is what Col. De Russy tells me that in the winter 1811-12 "I (De Russy) commanded at West Point as a Cadet. I was appointed in June 1812. I had the following named Cadets under my Superintendence during the winter, viz Dana, Merchant, Allanson, Gardner, Munro & Adams. It is very probable that there were others connected with the Academy at that time who were absent during the winter". Allowing all to be as here stated it would not satisfy my enquiry. Was Col. De Russy at West Point during the year of 1811 & if so can he not remember at what time instruction ceased to be given in that year? That time, if it can be ascertained, fixes the epoch when the Academy had run out & ceased to exist in fact for the time being. My impression is, you know, that the Term in that year was an exceptional one closing earlier than usual, owing to the circumstance that all or nearly all of the eighteen Cadets then on the rolls had completed the Course & become candidates for promotion. The promotions on the 1st of Jany 1812 reduced the number of Cadets on the rolls to Four neither of whom could have been at West Point at any time in 1812 except De Russy. Cutbush & Fanning were not, I know & my belief is strong that the 4th, viz., N. W. Smith was not. So that there could have been no Cadets at West Point in term time from sometime in 1811 until after the commencement of the War. When "the wheels were again set in motion" is a question that remains to be answered but I think it will be found to have been sometime in 1813.

Col De Russy would doubtless be greatly surprised, were you to prove to him, documents in hand, that the Cadets he named as being "under his Superintendence" in 1811-12 were not Cadets at that time. Dana, Merchant & Gardiner were appointed in Sept. Allanson, Munro & Adams in Oct. 1812 but it is believed that neither of them recd. instruction at West Point 'till sometime in 1813.

As heretofore stated by me, there were only nine Cadets appointed between 1808 & the War of 1812 viz., Fanning, W. A. Hobart, Ashley, Burchstead, Boisaubin, W.W. Smith & Leffingwell appointed in 1809 & Alex. Thompson & Sumpter appointed in 1810! There were three others who were appointed in 1809, viz Chandler, Johnson & Paine but as I have recollection of them I suppose they declined. I think you will find no other names. I am very respectfully & truly yours
S. THAYER
Captain Geo. W. Cullum,
U.S. Engrs.

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 2d April 1853

My dear Genl,

Yours of the 31st ult has come to hand & is a most welcome messenger. We now understand each other. If we go to work in the right way & at the right time, that is to say before the next edition is sent to the printer (when you write to Col Lee please enquire when that will be) the name of Col. Williams will, I doubt not, be restored to its former place at the head of the List. If it would not be too late it might be best to defer action thereon 'till your visit in July. Speaking of your intimacy with Col. W. you say "it never faltered to the day of his death that I know of" I am a witness in the case having heard the Col. speak of you "times without number" in the most affectionate terms as a father was wont to speak of his darling child. The last time I heard him pronounce your name was on the occasion I described in my last letter. His dying farewell to me & the Corps. "You mention knowing the Col. in 1806." Did I? Look again, mon cher ami. If you find any such thing in my letter I agree to send you my check on the State Bank Boston for five hundred dollars. What I did say, if my memory serves me was, "I was at West Point in every year from (or "after" which is the same thing) 1806 which does not mean, I take it, in 1806. If I wished to deceive I could not flatter myself that you forgotten the fact that I saw West Point for the first time in August 1807. Thinking I might have occasion to compare my recollections with yours touching the early history of the Academy & in such case that we ought to know the times to which each others recollections would refer I gave you an account of my own connection with the institution prior to the War of 1812. but you did not return the compliment. Will you be good enough to answer the following queries. 1st. At what time was the Acady. organized & put in operation under the law of March 16th 1802.? Name the officers & Cadets then at West Point & also the instructors. 2d In what year & month were you first detached from West Point & when did you next return there? 3d I found you in command of the Post in 1807. At what time did you assume the command? You left West Point, I think, in Decr 1807 & were never there again prior to the War of 1812. Col. Williams it seems was out of service from June 20th 1803 to April 19th 1805 a period of 22 months. Do you know what was the condition of the Acady. during that period? Who directed it? What officers were there; who were the instructors etc. In addition to the particulars mentioned in my last it may not be amiss to state that I have known intimately every officer promoted from West Point prior to 1813 except the following eight viz. Levi, Jackson, Saml. Gates, Bouis, Chouteau, Lucas, Windham & Loramier & every other other Cadet who was at West Point prior to 1813 except the five following who were not promoted viz. Ambrose Porter, Doyle, Wm. Macomb, Kelly & Auguste Loramier. Of all the others I have a distinct recollection. You now understand of what things & persons I may be able to speak from my own personal knowledge. & in like manner I would be glad to know of what things & persons you can speak from your own personal knowledge. We shall then both be ready to compare & discuss if occasion require.

Until I recd. your first letter I was not aware that your son Foster (Swift)* was at Cambridge. When you spoke to me on the subject in Boston you had not made up your mind to send him there. I shall go to see him of course. Ever faithfully your old friend

S. THAYER

Genl. J.G. Swift

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

No. 2

South Braintree 4th April 1853

My dear Sir

After your return to West Point (or sooner if you remember, or have access to the laws) I would thank you to state for my information (for the laws are not before me) the number of Cadets authorized to be appointed by the acts of 1802 & 1808. My impression is that by this former act there were in addition to four Cadets of Engineers, 40 Cadets of Artillery--total=44, & by the act of April, 1808 there were in addition to the above

2 Cadets to each Comp'y of Light Artillery - - - - -	-20
2 Cd ^o to each of the 60 Comp'y of the New Reg't of Inf'y & Rifle	120
2 Cd ^o to each of the 8 troops of Light Dragoons- - - - -	<u>-16</u>
Total <u>additional Cadets</u> - - -	
156	

which added to the 44 previously authorized would make 200 from 1808 to 1812. Respectfully & truly yours
 Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
 U.S. Corps of Engrs.

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 4th April '53 (1853)

My dear Sir:

I have recd. your Note of the 28th March together with the manuscript Register of the Corps of Engineers which you had the kindness to transcribe with your hand. Therefore accept my sincere thanks.

There are seven letters of mine which you have not acknowledged dated as follows, March 8th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 19th, & 24th. They were all enclosed in envelopes addressed to the Chief Engineer. If either of them failed to reach me please inform me otherwise take your own time to reply. I have to request that you will preserve my letters, not because they are worth preserving, but precisely because they are not. They were too hastily written, too full of repetitions & other defects to remain permanently in other hands than my own. I shall therefore probably ask you to return them after you shall have done with them in exchange for yours, if you so say.

If Mr. (George?) Stannard* of whom you speak is the celebrated lawyer of that name I had the honor of a slight acquaintance with him many years ago & if he has not entirely forgotten me would be glad to be kindly remembered to him. I remain
very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
U. S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 5th April '53 (1853)

My dear Sir:

I had already sent to the Post Office two notes addressed to you at Richmond as directed when I rec'd yours of the 1st instant. Their contents were unimportant & I shall not repeat them here except one item requesting you when convenient to send me a Mem. stating the number of Cadets authorized to be appointed by the law of 1802 & the additional number by the law of 1808. My impression is that the former authorized = 44, viz. 2 to each of the 20 comp. of Artillery & 4 of Engrs. & that the law of 1808 authorized in addition = 156, viz. 2 to each of the 10 Comp. Light Arty - - - - - 20
 2 to each of the 60 Comp. of 5 Reg'ts Inf'ty & 1 Reg't. Rif. - -120
 2 to each of the 8 troops of Lt. Dragoons - - - - - 16
 Total authorized from 1808 to 1812 - - - - - 200

I take it for granted that you have my letters dated March 8th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 19th & 24th but I shall not expect you to reply to them 'till you get back to West Point.

Are the Muster-rolls of West Point prior to 1817, or any of them, in existence? Have you found the correspondence between the War Dept & Genl Swift to which I have heretofore referred?

I am very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 6th April, 1853

My Dear Sir:

I just now recd. your favor of the 4th designed "to pay off the first installment of my (your) arrears of replies to your (my) letters" Very well, let me have all the installments & then I will consider whether there will be discount to be paid back so soon as I can find leisure to arrange the items & balance the account. There must necessarily, however, be a long delay, how long I am now unable to say, probably many weeks before I can reply to your letters. all my time being occupied by official duties & other pressing demands upon it & leaving no fragments to spare for polemics. This then is my last missile for the present & will itself be very brief Be it remembered that whatever opinions I have expressed on any of the topics discussed between us were merely hypothetical & emitted with no other view than to elicit facts. You had ransacked, & thoroughly as I had been led to suppose, the public offices without finding a particle of evidence tending to established the fact in question touching the "inspectorship" You have now at last succeeded in making discoveries, & I rejoice at it, from which it appears that "the inspectorship was recognized by the Mil'y Acad'y Regulations of May 12th, 1818" and also, that many letters in 1818 were by me addressed to Gen'l Swift as Inspector. Now will you be good enough to send me an extract of the said Regulations so far as they relate to the inspectorship; and, also a mem. stating the dates of the aforesaid letters or at least several of the earliest, for with your permission, it still remains to be proven that Gen'l Swift was inspector continuously from 1815 to the date of his resignation as stated in the Register. If you will refer to my General Instructions (which I have before me & which you will doubtless find in his office) issued by the Secretary of War (George Graham) & bearing date 6th August 1817 you cannot fail to see & acknowledge that the famous order of 28th Feby 1815 was thereby annulled. I think it will also be found that the office of inspector when it was established on my proposition in 1818 did not rest on the authority of the order of 1815 but was a new office entirely different from the former one & resembling it only in name. Such are my impressions (I think I would be justified in employing stronger language) & I would be right glad (not to say delighted) if you could shew by facts that they are unfounded. I remain very respectfully & truly
yours
S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

FROM Robert F. W. Allston*

Georgetown, So. Ca. 7th April 1853.

Dear Sir,

Being disappointed of the expectation which I vainly indulged of having the pleasure to receive you this winter, at my rustic mansion on the Pee-Dee, or at least, en passant, in the city of Charleston; I am constrained to give you the trouble of this missive the object of which is to beg you will do me the favour to name a day in June, July, or Septr. on which it will suit you to meet us at West Point, and receive the greetings of the individual members, survivors of the class of 1817.¹ The first which had the good fortune to pass thro' the ordeal at the Military Academy under the new régime of your organization.

There are but eighteen left, as far as I have been informed: one who graduated in 1819, Walker; two who graduated in 1820, Baker and Donelson, eleven who graduated in 1821 - Courtenay, Wheelright, Dimmock, Wallace, (I have no word from Wallace) Allston, Morton, Henshaw (not heard from) Bainbridge, Scott, Wheeler, (not heard from) Capron, and four 1822. Mansfield, Bliss, Morris, Abercrombie. --

All from whom I have heard express the warmest approbation of the idea, and indulge in anticipation the pleasure of so interesting a meeting.

I trust my dear Col., that nothing Providential will occur, to produce disappointment of our just and reasonable expectation, and that you will not suffer any lingering remnant of feeling, however just of old, to outweigh both the influence of my class's desire, which I feel warranted to utter and do hereby most respectfully lay before you, and the promptings of your own good heart.

For if I have not mistaken my own observation, confirmed by the experience of our friend Courtenay, it will afford you heartfelt pleasure, not to go through any great public parade (I have as little taste for this as you perhaps,) but to meet the remnant of your earliest class, at the social board; to exchange greetings with them on classic ground, and to revive with grateful satisfaction the agreeable associations of former days, amid scenes familiar and dear to all. Scenes, which many of us may thus be permitted to visit for the last time.

Think Sir, how grateful it will prove to each of us at the close of life to remember the occasion and the incidents of this re-union, how proudly satisfactory to you, how soothing and consolatory to us.

Then think! Simple and natural and unpretending as this suggestion of my own, so promptly seconded and approved by my comrades, how fruitful and important may be the consequences hereafter to our Alma Mater - But I will not presume to fatigue you with arguments, which will arise in your own breast in a more attractive and convincing form, if you will but give up your own mind to the consideration of the claim, which we of 1817, have upon you, and the gratification it will so generally afford if you will acknowledge and yield to it.

Have the goodness to communicate with me, at your earliest convenience, as I must in turn give the necessary information, as I promised, to my class mates who are separated far and wide.

I sincerely hope your health has been good since I last saw you, and in the hope and with the expectation of meeting again this Summer I remain dear Sir with great respect yours truly
ROBT. F. W. ALLSTON
To Col. Thayer Boston

*See Index

¹ Refers in this & subsequent letters to cadets who entered in 1817 as Class of 1817. Allston actually graduated in Class of 1821.

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 9th April, '53 (1853)

My dear Sir

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your second installment (April 5th) now if you continue in this way much longer sending installment after installment I shall, one of these days, on adjustment of our accounts, find myself largely in your debt & liable to refund the balance with compound interest. However that may be I cannot spare the money (time is money) for the present must therefore beseech you to wait patiently. A few words only "en passant." You begin by saying "the main issue between us is" &c. Now, with your permission there is no "issue between us" yet altho' I cannot say there will not be in the end. Let us wait before "joining issue" 'till all the facts are reached. There have been two ways of writing history & consequently two classes of historians; the one carefully collecting & collating his facts & materials beforehand & leaving the legitimate deductions and conclusions to follow of themselves: the other aiming to establish certain preconceived theories or opinions & neglecting or rejecting all facts which do not happen to square with such opinions. This, I doubt not, is in most cases done by the historian unconsciously & in perfect good faith. Such is the fallibility of poor human nature against which let us be on our guard both you & I & I, assuredly, not less than you.

With regard to "next in rank" it would not, I think, be difficult to shew that the paragraphs of the Regulations referred to would not help you out, but, as I have heretofore remarked, words & time spent with that view would be "en pure porte." Whether your interpretation of the phrase "next in rank" be the correct one or not is not of the least consequence; it having no bearing, as far as I can see, on the main question which is not one of law but of fact & fact only. Did Col. Williams, while in the service after March 1802, direct, administer & govern the Academy at all times equally, as well during his temporary absences, as, when personally present? Was he not alone held responsible for the Institution? & were not all the powers corresponding with that responsibility vested in & exercised by him & him only? Was any other ever recognized as the Superintendent by the President, Secretary of War or indeed, by any one else? These are the questions to be answered by facts, if possible. Such facts as I can produce bearing on the main question will be found in the "Notes" I have promised. As to Genl Swift I have nothing to say leaving him to answer for himself. I remain very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum,
U.S. Corps of Engs.

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TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 11th April 1853

My dear Sir,

My letter written on the 9th acknowledging yours of the 5th will go with this, there having been since then no return mail 'till this day. Yours of the 6th came to hand on Saturday evening (9t) & referring to my letter of the 18th says "To all this charge I have only to reply that I am not the culprit, having copied verbatim et literatim your own & your successors registers in all that pertains to the Superintendancy after January 3rd, 1815" precisly so, If a charge at all it was a charge against myself & myself only. I had so stated & explained it in a former letter & therefore in writing the paragraph cited it did not occur to me that you would apply it to yourself. It was in fact not meant as a charge against any one nor was it intended to refer to the past.

Referring to Genl Swift you say "I do not see as Inspector how, after Feby 1815 he would have "responsibility without power" differently from the present Inspector who certainly has both" As to the words "responsibility without power" I must take another opportunity to explain them partly from want of time & also because I am unable at this moment to call to mind the connection in which I used them. What are the powers of Genl Totten I do not pretend to know as I once before remarked but I do know that from Augt 6th, 1817 to July 1833, no Chief Engineer or Inspector was ever authorized to exercise or ever did exercise any power, control or command over the Acady or its officers or that he had any responsibilities or duties in connection therewith other than those specified in the first paragraph of the Academy Regulations which were limited to the duty of making "an inspection at least once a year" & communicating "the order of the Secretary of War". The source of your error here is probably the same as of that in which you fell in supposing the office of inspector after 1817 was the same office as the previous one under the same name & that it had been continuous which it certainly was not. After Augt 6th, 1817 (see my instructions) the Superintendent was "amenable" to & subject only to the orders of the President" thro' this (the War) Department."

Your request touching the Surgeons at West Point prior to 1814 shall be duly attended to. I am very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 12th April '53 (1853)

My dear General,

Yours of the 8th came to hand yesterday. It appears that under the law of March the Acady. recd. its first organization in June

1802

at which time there were present Major Williams Superdt. W. A. Barron prof. of Math. Mansfield prof of Phily. & as I understand from your letter the following Cadets viz. Swift, Proveaux, S. Gates, W. Gates, Jackson, Porter, Levi, Armistead & Livingston. (a) Lillie is not mentioned altho he was appointed a Cadet in 1801. Was he not at West Point at any time with you? if so please say when & how long. You mention De Masson as present in 1802. The official record says he was appointed July 12th 1803. Were there no other officers present in this year? Where were Wadsworth, Wilson & Macomb? (a) & Totten in the autumn of 1802.

1803

Present, it is supposed, Williams until 20th June (date of his resignation), W. A. Barron, Mansfield until 14th Nov. when he was appointed Surveyor Genl. of Ohio etc. De Masson after July, & all the above named Cadets besides the following who, it is believed, joined the Acady in the course of the year viz. Hannibal, Allen, Doyle? Heiliman, Willard, Bennett, Wm. Macomb & McRee. You did not mention at all the names of Doyle who was appointed in April, McRee 14th April & Wm. Macomb*. Had neither joined before you left? You name H. Allen, Bennett & Bomford as being present at West Point in 1801. Allens appointment as Cadet bears date 14th June 1803. Bennetts 8th July 1803, Bomfords 22d Oct 1804 Five months after you left. You doubtless saw Bomford at West Point about that time as he was then living near that place (on the opposite side of the river keeping a store if I was correctly informed) & hence, probably, your mistake so far as relates to him Were there no other officers at W. P. in 1803 besides those above named? Who superintended the Acady as Col. Williams successor? Was it not Wadsworth?

* & Willard appointed Nov. 1803

1804

You, Macomb & Wilson were detached in April. What officers & Cadets did you leave at West Point. Barron & De Masson of course. Was Wadsworth there? Any others? There should have been on the rolls at that time eleven (11) Cadets, unless Lillie, Porter, Doyle & Wm. Macomb had previously resigned, in which case there were only eight (8) as follow. Proveaux, W. Gates, Totten (who you say came in the autumn of 1802) H Allen Heiliman, Willard, Bennett, & McRee. My impression is that Totten had left for Cincinnati with Col Mansfield but you will probably remember. John Watsons appointment as surgeons Mate bears date 22d Nov. 1803. Was there any Surgeon at West Point before him? Who was the Chief Engineer or senior officer of the Corps between 15th Feby 1805 the date of Wadsworths resignation & April 19th 1805 the date of

Col. Williams' reinstatement? Was it not Major Barron? & who superintended the Acady while Col. W. was out of service? You rember doubtless that the Acady had entirely run out & became defunct in 1811 & was not resuscitated untill some time after the commencement of the War of 1812. Can you tell me the exact time when the wheels were again set in motion? It could not have been, I think, until sometime in 1813.

I intend soon to give you some of my reminiscences that you may compare them with your own & should there be found any discrepancies that we may reconcile them if possible. I think such a comparison cannot fail to brush & rub off the cobwebs, dust & rust from one memories & may possible save from oblivion some fact that may be useful to the future historian of the Academy or of the Corps. I propose to visit Newyork in the last week of April & if I find by enquiry at 56 Exchange place that you are still at Brooklyn I shall make another desperate effort to find the residence I remain your faithful & affectionate friend

Genl. J. G. Swift

S. THAYER

*See Index

To Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 14th April (1853)

My dear Genl.

I have the pleasure to acknowledge yours of the 12th with Col. (Robt. E.) Lee's* letter.

I feel a strong desire that all the facts now known or recoverable having any bearing on the histories of the Corps & the Academy may be collected & put in such a shape that they may be preserved & available whenever the proper time arrives for writing those histories which, I think, is not yet. I would also be glad to see biographies or biographical notices of Col. Williams, McRee, Wood & other deceased officers of Engrs. whose exploits or careers have shed more or less luster on the Corps or Alma Mater but I am so unfortunate as not to be able to see the claims of "old pewter" to such a distinction. My opinion is that any such notices, or any history of the Academy, whenever written should be entirely separate from the Register which is designed to be a periodical work & purely statistical in its character. I would myself be entirely satisfied if I could see Col Williams name in the next edition of the Register standing at the head of the List, precisely as it had stood for thirty years in all but the last Register still I would not object to the notice you propose in his case for which there are, I think, peculiar reasons applicable only to him. As to the others I think the record of their names with the offices they filled as it has heretofore stood is all the mention they are entitled to in such a work. With reference to the history of the Acdy after its resuscitation in 1813 & prior to 1817 can you you inform me whether the Cadets were examined for admission & if so from what time & whether there were regular examinations for graduation before the Academic Staff & if so in what years. Your brother William H. & others whom I have consulted have no recollection of any such examinations. Can you inform me also when Cadets began to receive pay from the times they joined the Acady instead of the dates of their appointment. Your friend
S. THAYER
Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

(TO Robert F. W. Allston?*)

Boston 20th April 1853

My dear Sir,

I duly recd your communication of the 7th instant & perused it with emotions & feelings such as you will better conceive than I could describe. The kind recollections of me by those whose education it was my good fortune to superintend at West Point I prize above every other earthly blessing. In comparison with this & indeed without this no other would possess any value in my eyes except the consciousness of ever having discharged my duty according to my best judgment with a single view to the welfare of the young gentlemen confided to my charge & without a thought on the consequences to myself. While you were a Cadet the government of the Academy was attended with peculiar difficulties. There were many grievances real or supposed. That these have been forgotten or forgiven by the subjects of them, as I flatter myself has been the case for the most part, is owing to their noble & generous natures & is no evidence of my own merits. The idea you have started & are desirous of having realised must commend itself to the good feelings & the judgment of all concerned. The example set by your class would doubtless be followed by the succeeding classes wherein would result the most important consequences to the welfare of our alma mater. Now the results would be same so far as the institution is concerned whether my humble self were present or absent, dead or alive & I must therefore most earnestly entreat & insist that this circumstance may not be made a condition in the premises. You have done me the honor to request that I would name a day in June, July or September on which I would meet the surviving members of the class of 1817 at West Point & there on classic ground to exchange greetings & revive the agreeable associations of former days. Such a scene in the prospect has indeed an irresistable charm & if permitted every feeling of my heart would dictate a ready compliance with the request but unfortunately I am not at liberty to say what I would be able to do on any given future day. & were I to name a day for the purpose the chances would be five to one that I could not be present however strong might be my inclination. Not to mention official duties which might prevent I am now verging towards the limit of "three score years & ten" with more than an ordinary share of bodily infirmities & in an habitual state of health requiring tranquility, retirement, & freedom from all excitement or agitation. I can say in all sincerity that of the sixteen classes which entered or were graduated during the period of my superintendence there is no one whose surviving members I would be more happy to meet than that of 1817. They have the highest claim to my affection by "right of primogeniture," as the first born under the new regime nor am I aware that there is any other class of which the Alma Mater has more reason to be proud. Of the 53 admitted in 1817 23 dropped off without waiting to receive the honors of graduation. including some of high standing viz. Edson subsequently a distinguished officer of Marines, Day who commanded a Revenue Cutter, W. G. Hunter who is a respectable citizen of Vermont, Holmes, Thomas Lowndes, Henry Etc. Most of the others

have probably been useful & worthy citizens. Of the 30 (35 including Courtenay, Prescott, Morton, Rogers, & Lagnel) not less than 17 including many of the most distinguished live only in our memories. There still survive as far as I have heard eighteen viz. 3 graduates of 1819 & 20 - 4 graduates of 1822 & the following named graduates of 1821 viz. Courtenay, Dimmock, Wheelwright, Wallace, Alston, J. B. Scott, Morton, Capron, Henshaw, Wheeler & Bainbridge none of whom you alone excepted have I seen for many years.

FROM Robert F. W. Allston*

Chicora Wood (near)
Georgetown So. Ca 29" April 1853

My Dear sir

However I may regret the conclusion indicated in your letter of the 21st I cannot but respect the reasons which you assign; reasons, some of which, my own approaching infirmities enable me to appreciate.

"Who knows what a day may bring forth"? It would be high presumption to count upon entire success in any appointment of the kind. Still the world must progress. And we must perform our part. As you, sir, have declined naming a day, I must, in humble reliance on the smiles of kind Providence, undertake the responsibility of naming one.

Guided therefore by the consideration that some of our friends of the Army may be order'd to distant posts before the Autumn, I will venture to name Wednesday 14th July, the earliest day on which it would probably suit Prof. (Edward H.) Courtenay* to meet us after the close of the laborious Session of his College, the University of Virginia -

I will adopt your suggestion, and not make the (contingency) of your presence, however coveted by us, a condition of our meeting in class. - But in case you should find it convenient about that time to make a week's excursion, I think I can suggest a little plan which might be readily & quietly carried out - One day will take you from Boston to "Cold Spring" where your very good & worthy friend Mr (Gouverneur) Kemble* has a retreat for you as quiet & comfortable as possible - R(obert) P. Parrott* his adjunct is his next neighbor, and is still more retired). Then, if more agreeable to you the members of the class might pay their respects to you - And from thence you might survey at leisure, (as you must naturally desire and may not hereafter have so satisfactory an occasion to do) the cherish'd scene of your early, distinguish'd and most efficient labors in the field of scientific education - But I will not press this point. I leave it to your better judgement & discretion; and turn to touch upon a matter of much interest to us also.

You will not My Dear Col, deny us your first-born class, the privilege of waiting upon you with an offering of our respectful remembrance and kind regards?

I have been instructed by the members of my class to procure a plain straight sword with the inscription of their names and yours, which will be ready on the (29) June nay sooner, and which will be presented to you either in a quiet way at Cold Spring as above suggested, or by deputation at Boston, as shall be most agreeable to yourself.

This offering simple & trifling in itself, but the interesting vehicle of the most kindly sentiment from almost every state in the Union, is already provided for and will be tender'd - I acquaint you with this privately - As to the manner of its presentation, your wishes, if communicated to me shall guide us, as far as I may have influence with my associates when assembled.

Last Autumn I communicated something of my purpose to Mr Kemble, than whom we could not have a more ready & cheerful co-adjutor - From his own statement I feel confident in saying "You know that you will be at home in his cottage & will be as retired & quiet as you like, until Saturday which is the "boy's holiday" - Good Mrs Parrott his sister is always "at Home".

For the very kind manner in which you extend to my son an invitation to visit you with me at Boston I sincerely thank you Sir. It will afford me much gratification, if his leave of absence allow him an opportunity, to present my stripling son to so distinguish'd an officer of the Engineers

I meet tomorrow, in the harbor, Prof A(lexander) D Bache* & some of his assistants on the Coast Survey, who will ride into the country on Sunday give me the day after church - It always affords me pleasure to improve an occasion of this sort to enjoy the Society of my former friends of the Army - I remain My Dear Sir with great respect your friend & Humble
Svt

ROBT. F. W. ALLSTON

To Col Thayer, Boston

1st May - I am happy to say that Mr. Bache is delighted with the plan on foot - and (Alexander H.) Bowman* says he would be willing to go on foot, rather than miss the occasion, if he knew the time.

But no one knows the day named, except yourself & the other Gentlemen to whom I have communicated it of necessity.

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Boston 2d. May. 53 (1853)

My dear Genl.

On reaching home I found on my table your favor of the 25th from which I infer that you think me wanting in justice or generosity or both towards "old pewter" now I think it would puzzle you or "old pewter" himself to point out an act or word of mine that would justify such an accusation. You know all the relations I ever had with him & must acknowledge that I gave him no cause to regard me as his enemy. In fact he never believed me such but it suited his purpose to try to make others believe it. My only offense was the treating of his squibs with silent contempt. I would not, if I could, injure a hair of his head & feel no other sentiment toward him than that of pity. I think I know him at least as well & can judge him quite as impartially as any other person. Before he went to W. P. he was with me at Dartmouth College over two years. At W. P. I saw more of him & under circumstances more favorable for judging him than did either you or Col. Williams. The opinions entertained of him by the latter whatever they were could have no influence on my own which were formed on a more thorough knowledge of the man. Your "veneration for Col. W." blinded you "from 1813 to 1817 as to certain points of old pewter" but are you sure that you are not still blinded as to certain other points. Sure it is that you are so or that all others who are competent Judges are themselves blinded. You say "he was an industrious teacher, especially "in drills of Cadets who joined in the War of 1812 viz. Alexn. Williams, W. W. Smith & others "granting all this would that service entitle him to the honor of a place by the side of Col. W. & to the exclusion of scores of other teachers who were not inferior to him & of whom some taught nearly as many years as he taught months. In any history of the Acady which may be written let Justice be done to all but also let Genl. W. stand on a pedestal by himself elevated above all others & not grouped & (confounded) with drill masters. You say Hassler was at W. P. till 1811-12. You meant to say doubtless 1809-10. He was there only in 1807, 1808 & 1809. having resigned in Decr. 1809. on being appointed a prof in Union College. Please remember to notify me of the time of your intended visit some week or ten days beforehand in order that I may be present & ready to receive you Ever truly yours

S. THAYER

Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Fort Warren Boston Harbor 9th June 1853

My dear Genl.

The extract from a certain letter enclosed in yours of the 3d (rec'd on the 7th) was dated, you say, Decr. 1845. This must be a mistake. I was then in Paris & not in Washington as the extract purports. I have seen neither Washington or Col. (Joseph) T. (otten)* since 1842. Nor could he have seen me "looking well" at any time between 1840 & 1842. The date was probably somewhere between 1836 & 1839. since which time the unaccountable change of feeling occurred probably in or about 1843. There has been no interchange of greetings between us for more than ten years nor will there ever be again while we live under any circumstances. I regret therefore extremely that you forgot your promise to keep the matter to yourself.

As to the time of your promised visit, fix it so as best to suit your own convenience. I am not now aware that there will be any occasion for requesting you to postpone it to a later period than that suggested but should there be, owing to my absence or other cause, you shall have seasonable notice. With best regards to Mrs. Swift & family I remain your affectionate friend
Genl. J. G. Swift

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Fort Warren 18th June 1853

My dear Genl.

Yours of the 13th is recd. I was under the strong impression that my relation with A.¹ was mentioned to you in confidence as a matter to be kept to yourself, but as you did not so understand it I withdraw the expression touching your "memory." I was fully aware that what you did was from characteristic goodness of heart & kindness to me & my only reason for alluding to the subject was to prevent any thing more being said. If your remark "it is becoming a great soul to part in the active indulgence of all kind & early relations" was intended for me I cannot but think it inapplicable & unjust. I indulge no unkind feelings towards A. nor have I declined our early relations. but when early relations have without cause been dropped by one party I do not well see how the other party can, consistently with due self respect, solicit a renewal of those relations. There is no doubt in my mind that A. feels as friendly towards me now as he ever did. The only difference is that my friendship was once deemed of some value but now, unfortunately, owing to my nullity, it cannot be turned to any advantage. This is human nature & not to be complained of. I have never visited Cambridge in the course of my life & probably never shall but I would be exceedingly glad to see your son Foster (Swift)* as often & as much as it would be agreeable to him. I shall of course expect to see him here during your visit. I remain - your old & faithful friend

S. THAYER

*See Index

(notation in Swift's handwriting: "Col. Thayer Ansd. while sick in July).

¹ Probably reference to Joseph G. Totten.*

FROM Robert F. W. Allston*

West Point 5th July 1853

My Dear sir

The Agent of the Factory at Chicopee applies to me to know now if he may be permitted after the presentation of your sword, to exhibit it at the Chrystal Palace in New York as a specimen of their Art in manufacturing this arm. As the solution of this question must depend entirely on your will, I am constrain'd to refer it to you forthwith.

Be good enough to indicate to me your pleasure on the subject.

I regret to say that a letter from Mr. (Charles) Dimmock just received informs me of his illness, and of the injunction of his Physician to resort to Virginia Springs forthwith - He seems to feel sensibly the disappointment of not meeting us, and you in particular to whom he begs me to tendre the kindest & most grateful remembrance. I remain Dear sir with Great Respect yours truly
ROBT. F. W. ALLSTON
To Col. S. Thayer Boston

P.S. On leaving Boston I passed half a day at the Factory of Mr. Ames, and had the pleasure to see our simple offering just completed - I have ordered it here for the disposal of our friends on the 14" Inst.. after that it will be placed in your hands, and hence the necessity of the trouble I now give you before replying to Mr. Ames' application for permission to exhibit it.

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Fort Warren July 12 1853

My dear Genl.

Much to my surprise & regret I recd last evening a communication from the Secy. of War (Jefferson Davis)* informing me that the President (Franklin Pierce)* had appointed me a member of the Commission (relative) to the Armories constituted under an Act of Congress. The Commission to assemble at Springfield on the 1st day of August & having completed their business there to proceed to Harpers Ferry. I shall of course be very busy here from now 'till my departure & would have little time to enjoy your society. Under these circumstances would it not be best to postpone your visit 'till after my return. This disappointment is exceedingly vexacious. I shall make an effort to get rid of the duty but without any sanguine hope of success. Shall write again soon & am in haste sincerely yrs.

S. THAYER

Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

FROM Washington Wheelwright*, John B. Scott,* Seth M. Capron,*
Robert F. W. Allston,* Joshua Baker*

West Point 14th July 1853

Dear Sir

On behalf of the Class admitted under Cadets Warrants to the U. S. Military Academy in the year 1817, the undersigned, assembled at, and addressing you from, this classic ground, ask leave to present you with a sword which has been provided by the Survivors thereof, in testimony of our respectful and grateful remembrance of your superintending care.

Graduating as most of us did, in June 1821, ours was the first class which accomplish'd the four year's course of studies under the new organization administer'd by you.

This organization, from the inception of which is dated a new era in the history of the Academy, was effected under the auspices of Mr. (John C.) Calhoun* then Secretary of War, who justly estimating the high responsibility imposed on you by the Department, always render'd to your trying labors a judicious and firm support. Of the 53 Cadets admitted in 1817, two graduated in 1819, one in 1820, 24 in 1821 (including three admitted previously, and two admitted in 1818 who join'd us the succeeding year) and four in 1822. Of all these, Eighteen, only, now Survive. After a separation of Thirty odd years, these Survivors now, by their committee, wait on you with cordial greeting, and ask your acceptance of our offering, not for its intrinsic worth which is trifling, but as an expression of our personal esteem, and in token of our appreciation of your valuable services to our inconsiderate youth, - to our Common Alma Mater - to our beloved Country.

'Tis true, your élèves have attested those services to the civilized world, by their gallantry and efficiency in the memorable campaigns of Mexico - by their achievements in the fields of science - by their influence and success in every rank and profession of Life - yet as your first class, in memento of the tie which attaches us, we claim the privilege of placing in your hands this token by which, in the evening of life, you maybe reminded that your labors for their benefit, are duly appreciated by the objects of your former solicitude; and that your principles of action in governing this Institution, so little understood at the moment, have been fully vindicated in their estimation by the power of reason and the experience of time.

Solaced by the consciousness of having been true to a sense of your duty, valued by the Army as eminent in your profession, and ranking high in the enlighten'd judgement of the most scientific men in America; May your future days be bless'd with precious health, and the decline of life, may it impress itself gently and hopefully on your nature. We remain, Dear Sir with Sentiments of the highest respect & esteem very truly your friends & Servts. WHEELWRIGHT JNO B. SCOTT, Maj. U.S.A.
S M CAPRON ROBT. F. W. ALLSTON JOSHUA BAKER

To Col. S. Thayer U. S. Engineers Boston

N. B. We beg leave to say that at the request of the manufacturers, the sword has been left with them for exhibition at the World's Fair now open in the City of New York. It will be placed in your possession on or before the 15th Sepr. prox^o

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Fort Warren

Boston Harbor 16th July 1853

My dear friend,

From your letter of the 11th just recd I learn with extreme sorrow & concern that you are on a bed of sickness from a liver complaint. I pray that you may soon recover & that I shall still _____ the happiness I have been promising myself from having you with me during a part at least of the present summer. If you cannot come here I shall go to attend you at Geneva. We must if possible meet once more on earth & there should be no delay for neither of us has a long lease of life. Mine, I am sensible, is very short. I am reminded of it almost every moment by day & every hour at night by the pain I experience from the cancer on my face which, altho it has not made as rapid progress as I at first feared, is on the whole worse & its cure hopeless. This in addition to all my other complaints & infirmities exactly traceable to my illness at Norfolk at the close of the last war (1815). You have doubtless recd my note of the 12th hastily written to inform you that I had been appointed a member of a Commission which is to assemble at Springfield on the 1st of August & subsequently at Harpers Ferry. It is composed of Honble Andrew Stevenson,* Bt. Col. S. Thayer, Governor (John H.) Steele* of N.H., H. D. Smith* of Ct., Honble R. (euben) H. (yde) Walworth* of N.Y. & Bt. Col. (Edward Jenner) Steptoe* of the Artillery. It is very flattering doubtless to see one's name among so many honorables & was, I am sure, not unkindly intended by the Presdt. (Franklin Pierce)* & Secy of War (Jefferson Davis)* Yet it will probably compel me to resign my commission in the Army; why & wherefore I may explain hereafter. I shall feel anxious to be informed of any change in the state of your health & hope some member of the family will drop me a line should you be unable to write yourself. Your affectionate friend

Genl. J. G. Swift

S. THAYER

*See Index

FROM Robert F. W. Allston*

West Point 18th July 1853

My Dear Sir

I take great pleasure in forwarding to you the accompanying official missive & thanking you for your repeated kind invitation to myself - Expecting to be made, as one of a Committee, the bearer of our simple offering to you I proposed to myself the pleasure of waiting on you at Fort Warren the last of this month - But in as much as the circumstances require that we address you by letter, I have to beg you will not look for me just now. Be assured I will be gratified to wait on you personally should I be call'd to Boston at any time this summer.

Having your approbation of such a course we have placed the sword at the disposal of Mr. J. F Ames Agent of the Manufacturers until (15.) Septr. next - On or before that day (unless he can obtain your consent & agreement for some other day) he is instructed to deliver it to you.

I trust you will be pleased with the plan we have adopted.

In consequence of the misfortune of (Edward H.) Courtenay,* the illness of (Charles) Dimmock* & the distant stations of our Army friends, our meeting was small, but very hearty & cordial. It took place in fact on the 13th As the managers of the Chrystal Palace invited us to assist at the opening of the Fair on the next day, we adjourn'd to that place, & went down together in the morning of the 14th, not however before our committee had organized and instructed me to forward you their letter herewith enclosed.

(Joshua) Baker* & (John J.) Abercombie* have both in person given assurance of their hearty concurrence & none could write more warmly than (Benjamin) Walker* & (Alexander H.) Morton* & Dimmock.

My son having obtain'd orders for duty, is now at Carlisle Barracks, & will come to us at Xmas Holidays. I remain Dear Col. very Respectfully & truly yours
ROBT. F. W. ALLSTON
Judge Baker will call on you in a few days - as he goes to Newport. I will pay my respects sometime before October.

*See Index

FROM Robert F. W. Allston*

New York Hotel
City of N. York 8" Oct^r 1853.

My Dear Sir

I am constrained to inform you that it will be out of my power to see you again this year. It would have afforded me much pleasure to make my promised visit to you at Boston; & I looked forward to the occasion with much satisfaction - But the proposed disposition of my time in Septr. & Octr. has been precluded by new duties (requiring all the time which I can spare from the (Episcopal) Convention now sitting in this City, of which I am a member) which have been imposed upon me by the (Agl.) Association of the Southern States sitting in Alabama since the month of August.

I am in daily attendance on the Sessions of the Genl. Convention of the Church here which will sit probably two weeks more. As soon as it adjourns I shall proceed to my residence as rapidly as my family can travel.

You will see my Dear Col. that I must therefore take leave of you for the present.

I hope the sword has reach'd its destination as was enjoin'd on Mr. J. F. Ames - Will you do me the favor to inform me at this place. As I shall feel obliged to communicate with my absent friends, at my first leisure after reaching home.

In the hope of being permitted to wait on you at some time hereafter. (I should be greatly pleased to be able to greet you at my home in Carolina 70 miles north of Charleston) I beg you to believe me to remain Very Respectfully and truly
Your friend & Svt. ROBT. F. W. ALLSTON
Col. Thayer Boston

*See Index

TO Washington Wheelwright,* John B. Scott,* Seth M. Capron,*
Robert F. W. Allston,* Joshua Baker*

Boston Oct. 24th 1853

Dear Sirs

The Sword you have presented to me "on behalf of the Class admitted under Cadets Warrants to the U. S. Military Academy in the year 1817" I accept with profound emotions of pleasure & gratitude

I can recur with peculiar interest and satisfaction to the Class of 1817. It is associated in my mind with an eventful period of my life. In number approaching Sixty it joined the Institution a few weeks after I became its Superintendent. It was present when, in the same year, the "new organization" (which still subsists) was instituted & was the first class whose entire course of education I had the honor to superintend. It was also the first whose instructions embraced the regular term of four years. Altho not more distinguished, perhaps than the average of subsequent classes, it has furnished its due quota of eminent characters civil & military of whom the Alma Mater may well be proud, while there is not one, so far as I am informed, who has not "acted well his part" Of the thirty five (35) who graduated, nineteen, after various periods of honorable service, retired from the Army during Peace only however, to become more active & useful citizens. Among them are to be found learned professors & jurists, eminent Civil Engineers, a governor of a State, a member of Congress, a foreign Minister, a presidential Elector, a State Senator & other respectable functionaries. Of the Sixteen who never resigned, two were killed in battle & eight others have paid their debt to the Country, leaving but six survivors of whom all but one (who was in the pay Department) served in the late Mexican War with the highest distinction having gained ten brevets for feats of skill & valor in the field. This brief sketch of the history of the Class, imperfect tho' it be, may help to explain my high appreciation of the honor conferred upon me by the Eighteen surviving graduates. To know that my administration of the Academy (however viewed by them at the time) has met the approbation of their unbiased & matured judgments, & especially to feel assured that I hold a secure place in their affectionate remembrance & regard affords me supreme satisfaction & will ever cheer & solace me in the Evening of life now far advanced. With grateful acknowledgements for your most kind & flattering communication from West Point which accompanied the presentation of the sword & tendering to you all, individually, sincere wishes for your welfare & happiness I remain faithfully your friend & serv^t

S. THAYER B^t Col. U. S. Army

Maj^r W. Wheelwright, Major J. B. Scott, U. S. A., S. M. Capron,
Col. Robert F. W. Allston & Judge Joshua Baker

*See Index

FROM Robert F. W. Allston*

New York Hotel
25th Oct^r 1853

My Dear Col.

I have this instant received your note of 22^d inst. I pray you excuse my remissness in failing to acknowledge its precursor - Now to explain the meaning of "a certain box or parcel" with my name on it which has been left at your office--And I am sorry that Mr. Ames should have left you room to doubt a moment as to its contents being entirely your own.

I presume it can be no other than the straight sword, the poor offering which a Committee of our class, by letter in July last asked you to accept on behalf of that class. -

You will remember that afterwards, I forwarded to you Ames' Application to be allowed to exhibit it at the Chrystal Palace, as the designs & style of hilt were new. You replied that of course you could have no objection, but the exhibition must take place before it should have come into your possession -

Accordingly I told Mr. Ames that it might be exhibited by him until the middle of September when & certainly before the 1st October it should be placed in your possession. As the box was directed to me at West Point (where the sword was shown at the Adjt.'s office, the Mess Hall & the Hotel) I presume by my name being on the box in question, they have forwarded the same to you. I trust there is no mistake. If there be I shall not be able to forgive myself for allowing the business of the Church or any other business, to prevent my bearing it to you in person, as was my original intention. I shall be anxious until I hear that all is right, and agreeable to you.

After sitting day & night for three weeks & more the Genl. Convention will adjourn tonight sine die.

I will therefore be permitted to pursue our journey homeward on Thursday. With great respect I beg leave to remain Yours truly
ROBT. F. W. ALLSTON
Col. Thayer U.S. Engineers Fort Warren.

*See Index

TO Ichabod R. Chadbourne*

Fort Warren Nov. 5th 1853

My dear friend,

The malignant Star under which I was born & which has ever since kept its evil eye upon me so ordered it that I was not able to see your charming daughter Hannah during her late visit at Boston. I knew not she was there 'till gone. Owing to our vessel being laid up for repair her note dated Saturday Oct 29th only reached me on Wednesday Nov. 2d. I regret extremely that I had no earlier information of her visit. I trust that your health continues to be good & should be rejoiced to see you here.

Ever faithfully your friend

S. THAYER

Col. I. R. Chadbourne Eastport Me.

*See Index

FROM Robert F. W. Allston*

Chicora Woods 16. Nov. 1853

My Dear Col.

It is but a week since I reach'd my residence near Georgetown & received your reply to the Com. of the Class, as well as your kind note to me - The former, I was under obligation to furnish (Washington) Wheelwright* with in order that he might communicate it to the absent members of the class, who have a right to know what we have done - I would not part with the original so I made him a copy and despatch'd it. I have filed away your letters with the rest & those of the class to me, an interesting bundle (the correspondence of 8 months & more) which I wish'd to lay before you; but was disappointed. I hope yet to do so I wish you would come and pass sometime with me provided you can put up with a rustic's life. I can give you a good room in a house to itself (half a mile from us) where you may have your own servant in attendance if you wish & where you could pursue your writings or your books at your own pleasure & in comparative quiet - Or we would have pleasure in taking care of you at our own homestead as long as we could make you comfortable.

I have scarcely time to turn now from one side of my premises to the other before setting out for my public duties, but will be at home again from Columbia (D.G.) by Xmas - We expect the Sub Lieut by that time to add his cheerful voice to the sound of my happy family who will greet him warm hearts.

It would afford us all pleasure if you could make one at our Xmas dinner - With great respect Yours truly

ROBT. F. W. ALLSTON

To Col. Thayer.

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Boston 8th Decr 1853

My dear General,

I have been very busy of late & not 'till now have I found time to acknowledge your letter of Nov. 16th. Recurring again to the remark that "the U.S. School at W. P. was deemed by a large party to be an unconstitutional establishment" you admit that "the opposition (on constitutional grounds) was not in print" but why "not in print"? If constitutional scruples were really entertained by those editors of Newspapers & members of Congress who were racking their brains for all sorts of arguments to crush the Academy this which they must have deemed the best of all would not, assuredly, have failed to be urged & appear "in print" That it did not appear "in print" would be to me, were there no other, conclusive proof that no such opinion was seriously entertained especially by any "large party" It seems to me not prudent to put weapons in the hands of an enemy nor wise to ascribe to him higher & purer motives than those by which he was actuated. As to the history of the opposition to & attacks upon the Academy I may, perhaps, without vanity, claim to understand it quite as well as any one.

If, as it would appear, you think opposition to the Academy is at an end & not to be renewed you will soon be undeceived In the forthcoming history by Col (Thomas Hart?) Benton* there is a most virulent attack on West Point & this, I predict, is only an entering wedge. Take care lest by some incautious remark you call forth the old skunk from his hole. He would like nothing better than to have another occasion to spirt

In reference to the first resignation of Col. (Jonathan) Williams* you say "The War Dept. became apathetic" etc. & "Col. W. dissatisfied & retired from the Acady & the Army" The immediate & ostensible cause, as you well know, & the only one he ever mentioned to me was not a question of "rank" but of right to command at West Point between him & Captain (George) Izard*. Whether in confirming Izards claim (Henry) Dearborn* may not in some degree have been influenced, unconsciously perhaps, by party or personal feelings is, I suppose, merely a matter of conjecture. His second & final resignation you ascribe to the refusal or neglect of the government "to give him that rank in the Army to which his merits entitled him" This may have had some influence with him altho' I never heard him allude to it but being with him at the time & in his confidence I do know that there were other causes enough independent of that & without those I am quite sure he would not have resigned at that time. I will not do you the injustice to suppose it necessary to apologize for speaking freely just as I think on all subjects & take it for granted that you will use the same freedom towards me. Hoping that we shall meet somewhere in the course of the Winter & desiring best regards to Mrs. Swift & family I remain faithfully
your friend
S. THAYER

General Jos. G. Swift Geneva

* See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Boston Decr. 27th 1853.

My dear Genl.

Yours of the 19th is at hand. Altho' deeming (Thomas Hart?) Benton* a Humbug & heartily detesting him I have yet too much respect for him to have applied to him (as you seem to think I did) the rather vulgar figure of speech which escaped me in my letter of the 8th & which was really intended to allude to a personage bearing little resemblance to a "sleeping lion". We agree, I think, as to the cause of Col Jonathan Williams* resignation in 1803. My remark that "it was a question not of rank but of a right to command" was perhaps hypercritical. With reference to his resignation in 1812, admitting all you say (& whenever you state a fact of your own knowledge you will never find me to question it) I am still of opinion that the other causes to which you have not alluded & which came within my own personal knowledge, were the immediate & moving cause. To state the facts & circumstances here alluded to would require more time than I can now command. I doubt much whether a sense of the injustice done him by the Government in overlooking his claims to promotion would alone have induced him to resign at the moment the Infant Republic was commencing a life & death struggle with the giant Albion. There are some, I think, who would question the propriety of the act for such a reason. In this connection you remark. "You did not tell me what he said to you in 1815" I was with Col. W. in 1812 when he made up his mind to resign & thought I understood his reasons, but never afterwards had any conversation with him on the subject & of course could never have said I had. I saw him, it is true, in 1815 a few days before he expired but there was no allusion to his resignation. His mind dwelt on subjects better fitting his situation.

You refer to "Genl (George) Washingtons* purpose to supply Cadets to fill all vacancies" On what occasion, or in what paper was that "purpose" expressed? Altho' aware that the act of 1794 authorized the appointment of Cadets I was not aware that any were appointed during Washingtons Administration or indeed untill the last year of John Adams* administration & I had the impression that you were the only one appointed prior to March 2d 1801 two days before the inauguration of President (Thomas) Jefferson.* I subjoin a copy of my list of Cadets appointed prior to 1803 & would ask you to complete & correct it & to fill up the blanks opposite the names of Lillie, Porter & Doyle whose dates of appointment I have not been able to ascertain. Again, you speak of Mr. Jefferson as "the Revivor of the Academy" If he was "The Revivor" then there must have been an Academy before his time. Here too I must acknowledge my ignorance with no little mortification for being so badly posted up in the early history of the Army & the Academy.

You say, "I have some notion to send the letter before sending it to (William W.?) Seaton"* It would not become me to express any wish on the subject. Should you conclude to send it I would candidly but deferentially point any passages that may seem to me to require revision.

Wishing you all a "happy Newyear" I remain ever
faithfully your friend S. THAYER
Genl. Joseph G. Swift

Swift 12th May 1800
Levi 2d March 1801
Gates (Saml) 2d March 1801
Gates (Wm) 2d March 1801
Jackson 2d March 1801
Proveaux 2d March 1801
Armistead 1t May 1801
Livingston 8th June 1802
Totten 4th Nov 1802
Lillie Jno. S. son of Capt. J. L. of Milton
Porter Ambrose (P----near) 30 & 6 ft.
Doyle? Patrick

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 30th Jany 1854

My dear General,

I have your letter of the 24th informing me that you are about to remove to Brooklyn for the winter. I have it in contemplation to visit Newyork in the course of Feby. probably about the middle of the month. If you are there then we shall of course meet. I have promised to stay with (Thomas J.) Leslie.* I agree with you that Napoleon 3d* has made no mistake yet. Had it depended only on him the Eastern question would have taken a very different turn. Had Russia known in season that the invasion of Turkey for which there was not a shadow of a pretext would be regarded by the Great Powers as a (casus Belli) she would probably have desisted for the time being but now the war having commenced & being in possession of the Provinces north of the Danube it seems very unlikely that she will let go her hold in any event until Turkey yields the point of "Protection" & having yielded that Turkey in Europe becomes of course a Russian province. Whether the Russian Army will cross the Danube in the Spring & try to force the Balkan passes is less certain but the Emperor is evidently making preperations with that view. It is doubtless in the power of England & France to arrest his advance, not however by demonstrations & threats at which Russia & all the World laughs but only by the most vigorous & skillful application of (material) force & acting offensively. I have believed from the beginning that England will eventually back out & leave the poor Turks in the lurch, disgraceful & shortsighted as such a policy would be. I acknowledge however that my opinions & specualtions on the subject are not worth much. Indeed the calculations of the most far seeing statesman are liable to be falsified by the turning out of a ministry or by any one of a thousand events that may be imagined to occur & that no one could foresee As ever truly yours
S. THAYER
Genl. J. G. Swift Geneva

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 2d Feby. 1854

My dear General

Yours of the 27th with the Manuscript has just come to hand. The latter I have not perused but shall look it over & return it at latest by the time you reach Brooklyn. If I get through with it before the 8th it will be directed to you at Geneva. As ever your friend
S. THAYER
Genl. J. G. Swift Geneva N.Y.

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TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 3d Feby. 1854

My dear Genl.

I enclose herewith a tabular Statement which should have gone with my letter just now sent to the Post Office. I take the occasion to say that I duly appreciate the kind feelings which induced you to confide your manuscript to my inspection. It cannot be necessary to add that communications of this nature will ever be held sacred by me. Ever truly yours

S. THAYER

Genl. J. G. Swift Geneva

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 3d Feby 1854

My dear Genl.

I have just finished the perusal of your manuscript, or rather I have been trying to peruse it. Familiar as I am with your chirography I was much puzzled & after all there were words & several sentences I was quite unable to make out. You do not, of course, expect from me any verbal or literary criticisms. To that I would not be competent besides in composition as in dress every one has his own style & manner & if it be only respectable & becoming no other has a right to carp at it. So far as regards mere opinions whether as it respects persons or things it could not reasonably be expected that we should agree in all cases inasmuch as we have looked at them from different points of view or have derived our impressions from different sources or because our minds are perhaps so constituted that we deduce different conclusions from the same well established data. After all the points on which we may differ are, probably, very few & of little importance & would, I dare say, vanish entirely if we could talk them over together. As to your statements of fact I find little occasion for remark. The number who can "claim West Point as their Alma Mater" (instead of 1500 as you state) is 1626 viz to 1812 = 89 From 1812 to 1817 = 90. from 1817 to 1849 (date of Register last published) = 1370. permit me to remark en passant altho' out of place, that the no. of Cadets at West Point under my superintendence was = 1643 of whom 711 graduated. The no. of graduates now in Mily. Service is 707. 359 were killed in battle or have died in harness. Total now in service or have died in service = 1066. You say (see the bottom of page 4) the No of Cadets in 1808 was "augmented to 84" This I think is a mistake. Just look at the law of April 16th 1808 which, if I am not deceived authorises two cadets to each company of Artillery, Infantry, Rifleman & Dragoons thereby _____ in all 78 companies x 2 = 156 & this be it remembd in addition to the 50 authorised by the law of 1802 making the entire No. provided for = 206 instead of 84. You say - The No. assembled at that school "(prior to the war of 1812) was insufficient to fill the vacancies in the subordinate ranks of the Army" That is an historical fact but then you add "this omission had its origin in those influences" etc owing to which Congress as you say failed to afford adequate support to the Academy. Now, really, I must confess, I do not well see how "those influences" or any thing Congress did or omitted to do prevented the Executive from keeping the ranks of the Cadets complete to the full number provided for by law & had he done so it is clear that there would have been graduates enough "to fill" all "the vacancies in the subordinate ranks in the Army" - & that instead of 89 there would have been some five hundred (500) graduates at the commencement of the War of 1812 as you may see by a glance at the tabular statement herewith enclosed. It is proper here to remark that the numbers in the last column are predicated on the supposition that all the Cadets graduated & that the Course was one of two years which is very near but rather exceeding the average time the Cadets who graduated remained under instruction at West Point prior to 1812-13 I should also remark that (2d column) I have credited 1808 with 9 Cadets who were appointed early in 1809 either before or within a very few days of the time Doctor (William) Eustis* assumed the direction of the War Dept. & this I did in order to bring into more prominent view the design of that Minister from the beginning to crush the

Academy. The only Cadets appointed by him, if I am not deceived, during the (nearly) four years of his administration were Alexr. Thompson of West Point & Sumpter of S. Carolina, appointments which, it is fair to presume, were forced upon him. Now this fact should not be ignored by the historian of the War who should hold it up as a warning. For this I cannot see that Congress was blameable otherwise than for not impeaching the Secretary whose conduct in this particular was in keeping with many other of his acts which altogether amounted to little less than treason. In a word, my opinion is that you have put the saddle on the wrong horse. In your former paper Oct. 6th. you said. "The U. S. Mily. School was deemed by a large party to be an unconstitutional establishment" & in the unpublished Manuscript you add. Finally the Radical party at the close of Mr (James) Madisons* administration pronounced the Mily. Acady. to be an unconstitutional school" Well you know what I think about that & I have nothing further to say but let me ask is there not some apparent contradiction between that declaration & the one immediately following viz that the same party made "proposals to establish Military Schools in various Sections of the Country Union" etc. Why one school should be deemed unconstitutional while many or several would be perfectly constitutional can scarcely be accounted for except on the principle of grammar that two negatives make an affirmative. Now you must not think that I seek to change your opinions on the subject for I well know that I could not, if I would; but only that your attention should be called to an apparent discrepancy with a view to its being reconciled or explained if you deem it necessary. You say (Alden) Partridge was "educated at Dartmouth College." This would be understood to mean that he had completed the regular course of studies & was a graduate of that Institution. There is no harm that I know of in having it so understood but such was not the fact. He was not a graduate having left college before he had completed one half of the regular course. If we were together I might propose for your consideration some change in your arrangement of the topics but I could not well express my views on the subject in a letter without more time than I have to spare. I write in much haste & retain no copy of this letter.

S. THAYER

Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 5th Feby 1854

My dear sir,

In reply to yours of the 1st. (post marked 3d) Feby. I am sorry to inform you that my notes are too imperfect for your use having made no progress since last March. Altho' my whole time until recently has been necessarily been devoted to my official duties I might, & probably would, before now have taken them up again had I not been told that your new duties would demand your exclusive attention this winter leaving no time for your history. I am glad that it is not so. Will you be good enough to send me a series of questions embracing every minute particular touching which you desire information? They would serve to direct my attention to the essential points whereby labor would be saved & the notes all the sooner forthcoming. Meanwhile I would return brief answers to the questions furnishing the desired facts & information as far as I could, & for the rest referring you to the persons from whom, in my opinion, you would be most likely to obtain them. In reply to the enquiry whether all the statements in the article referred to "correspond with my impressions & recollections" I am free to answer that they do not in all respects but I defer to state wherein they do not until after you shall have seen another article from the same pen soon to appear in the Intelligencer. Partridge has indeed gone peace to his ashes. Some of the notices I have seen are curiosities containing about as many lies as paragraphs, but it is not worth while to point them out. He entered Dartmouth College in 1802 at the age of twenty four in the class immediately preceding mine. Altho a plodding student he was not a distinguished scholar. His fort was Mathematics in which he attained a standing about the middle of his class. He left College when he had completed one half of the regular course & was consequently not a graduate. At West Point he proved to be a good teacher of Huttons Mathematics or at least such portions of the work as were then taught. The higher branches he never studied. His cousin William Partridge who was much younger was vastly his superior in genius & attainments. He had read & was master of every work on Mathematics pure & mixed, then extant in the English language including the principia & other works of Newtons I remain very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engineers

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TO Ichabod Chadbourne*

South Braintree 6th Feby 1854

My dear young friend.

Yours of the 28th (post markd. 30th) Jany. came to hand on Saturday Evening (4th Feby) & relieved me from the solicitude I had felt in consequence of not having seen or heard from you for many months. I had been duly saying to myself that I would write by the next mail but as often found some pretext for delay. By the last mail I recd. a letter from my friend Capt. (Nicholas) Tillinghast* (late principal of the Normal School at Taunton & formerly with me many years at West Point as a Cadet & afterwards as a teacher) who is spending the winter in Florida for the benefit of his helath. He was at Jacksonville but on the 1st. of March would go to St. Augustine where it is cooler. The thermometer, he says, ranged from 75 to 80. There was little rain. he could walk or sit in the porch all the day. "The sun rose in beauty, floated over the heaven & went down in one unclouded blaze of living light"peas were fast coming forward tomatoes also & roses remain in blossom all the year round." Is not this inviting? You are a freeman & can go. Poor I am still in bondage shackled & manacled feet & hands.

You ask me how I pass the nights "Pretty well will I thank'ee" I get to bed regularly about 10 stretch myself on the back, fold my arms on the breast & with clasped hands say my prayers "Now I lay down to sleep" etc, take a comfortable nap of a couple of hours, then keep the vigils 3 or 4 hours which I devote to pious or other edifying meditations or giving flight to imagination, build castles, visit distant friends, retrace my former wanderings on the earth, soar among the stars until with tired wing I return & again commit myself to the arms of Morpheus. Now is not this a reasonable way of passing the night? I need not ask how your nights are passed, you rake, don't I rem'ber that famous night at Hatch's in Norwich? & that other - but I forbear.

You have not written a word respecting your visit to Hanover last summer. You must have enjoyed it much. Please remember me kindly to Mrs. Chadbourne & Miss Hannah. Ever
faithfully yours
S. THAYER
Col. I. R. Chadbourne

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 14th Feby. 1854

My dear General,

Your favors of Feby 4th & 8th with the Manuscript came duly to hand. In the first you say "The contradictory aspects of date in the Register of 1822 is owing to the comparative progress made by sundry of the Cadets more or less dull or negligent" What are the "contradictory aspects" here referred to? I have not been able to figure them in my mind. Other engagements have not permitted me until just now to glance at your manuscript. I see nothing therein calling for remark except the sentence commencing with "The West pointers will remember their marches through the country led by Capt (Alden) Partridge"* etc. "The occasion in the War of 1812" referred to was, I suppose, in 1814. The Cadets were again in Newyork in the Spring of 1817. but whether they went & returned by water conveyance or were "marched through the country" you will probably remember. With these exceptions, if they were exceptions, I never heard, as well as I can now remember, of any "March of the Cadets through the country led by Captain Partridge." There were Marches by my direction in 1818 to Goshen & other places, in 1819 to Albany Troy etc through Poughkeepsie etc. In 1820 to Philadelphia, Carlisle etc. In 1821 to Boston & Quincy etc. This last which was the only March ever made by the Cadets to Quincy or to Boston or into Massts. occurred four years after the resignation of Capt. Partridge. This error was of course one of the memory & not of your Diary. Altho' I have not abandoned the design of visiting Newyork & promise myself the pleasure of seeing you there in the course of the present month yet as I may be prevented from going so soon by unforeseen causes it seems to me best to return the manuscript by mail. I accordingly send it with this but under a separate envelope addressed to the care of Mr. (Peter) Richards.* I remain dear Genl. Respectfully
& truly yours
S. THAYER
Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree 17th Feby '54 (1854)

My dear Genl.

In your unpublished Manuscript I noticed a paragraph which might possibly lead the reader into a slight error which altho of little importance to anybody it may not be amiss to point out leaving you to change the phraseology if you deem it worthwhile. I do not ask it. From the words used it would, I think, be inferred that the change of Superintendent in 1817 was not decided on until after the President's (James Monroe)* visit to West Point (which, If I rightly remember, was about the end of June or beginning of July) whereas in fact the removal of Capt. (Alden) Partridge* & my appointment to the superintendency were decided on many months prior to that visit as I am going to shew. In Nov. 1816 at Paris I recd an official communication (which I have preserved) informing me that I had been designated by President (James) Madison* to be the permanent Superintendent of the U.S. Mily. Acady. at West Point & directing me to return to the U States in the ensuing Spring at latest, in order to assume the special duty assigned to me I accordingly returned to the U.S. about the middle of May 1817 & reported myself to you at Brooklyn. As soon as my arrival was known at Washington the following communication was addressed to you by the War Dept

"War Department 20th May 1817

Sir, I am instructed by the President to request that Major Thayer may be ordered to West Point for the purpose of superintending the Military Academy" &c &c (signed) "George Graham"

Why this order was not carried into effect until after the Presidents visit you will doubtless be able to recall to mind. You at that time sincerely believed that Capt. P. was admirably qualified to superintend the Acady. & indeed that he was the only officer in the Corps at all competent to fill that station. Under these circumstances altho' not concurring in your opinion of the man, from having known him a great deal better than you did, I felt a strong disinclination to be stationed at West Point. We both cherished the hope that the President, after a personal inspection, would consent to revoke the order & let Partridge remain. Then, as ever afterwards, I respected, because I knew & appreciated the purity of your motives. Then as always you were actuated by noble & generous feelings & a high sense of duty - a trait which, I regret to say, has not distinguished any one of your successors. I remain, dear Genl. Ever sincerely yours
S. THAYER
Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 18th Feby '54 (1854)

My dear sir,

I have glanced at the questions contained in yours of the 15th & think I shall be able to answer them or at least most of them in a satisfactory manner. As new questions occur to you write them down & transmit them to me from time to time. Let them embrace every point concerning which you desire more light irrespective of any thing said in our former correspondence & just as though there had been no such correspondence. Have you retained a copy of your questions. If you have I need only refer to the numbers without transcribing the questions themselves; thus saving me no inconsiderable labor. Please inform me for what years the Order books are complete & for which they are incomplete or wanting up to 1833. I think you once furnished this information but I have not been able to find it in any of your letters on file. In 1833 all were comple from 1802 to 1811. From which time to Nov. 1816 (to the best of my recollection) there was never any order book. Respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Capt. G. W. Cullum US Engrs.

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

54 Exchange Place
N.Y. 22 Feb. 1854

Dear friend,

I have duly recd. Yours of 15th & the M.S. with Your correction of my error about the Journeys of the Cadets after my Resignation, & which shall be corrected in my M.S. Shall rewrite the whole & give the origin of the Board of Visitors in '15 - & the Chapliancy & Treasury & also of (Richard) Willis* & the Band etc; the contradictory aspect of the list of '22 is that the Cadets had not been promoted according to their original standing on my list - that discrepancy was owing to delay from dullness etc.

Your letter of 17th surprises me - it is the first I ever heard or saw of the order that you transcribe - no allusion to such an order was made when Col. (James) Monroe* was at West Point in June 1817 when he wished you to succeed (Alden) Partridge* & when I told him that both (William) McRee* & yourself desired to avoid W. Point, -

Your notice also of the Letter you recd. in Paris on Superndt the Academy is the first intimation that ever reached me of its existence - but when I reflect on the vexatious troubles that I had with (George) Graham* & Genl. (Daniel) Parker* in 1816 its accounted for, - & also for the manner in which your & McRee's going to Paris was conducted by those persons - & Mr. (Alexander) Dallas* also, - among them the Committees of Congress 1816 were assured that I approved of attaching (Simon) Bernard* to the Corps! Aye I did approve of inviting an Engineer from France to be a Profr. in the Academy, but never to be interpolated in the Corps - when Bernard came I was required to remain at West Point while Bernard visited the Forts, I refused & in face of the order went to Washington & gave Graham & Parker my mind & insisted that I would supervise the action of the Board, - the conduct of Graham & Parker on that occasion disgusted me very much, - I thought I was sustaining the Honour of my officers, & I am gratified that you believe I thought so, while I am not ignorant of some of my deficiencies, I remember in my Resignation to have said to Mr. (John C.) Calhoun,* "McRee or Thayer should succeed me", & when in the act of retiring I met (Joseph G.) Totten* who said the Corps should have known of my purpose in order to coaction, I said every officer will act as he may find proper, as McRee did soon after, - & Totten in his comments (on my Remonstrance) last year to the Secy War said that his domestic affairs prevented his following my example in 1818, - I was not entirely ignorant of the views of some of my Brother Officers, & had I been able would have resigned the Day that the Brevet was conferred on Bernard, in fact I asked the President in 1817 to find me some civil office etc, but a truce with these personalities - Your friend

J. G. SWIFT

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree 24th March 1854

My dear sir,

The enclosed with such modifications as you may deem suitable I would recommend to have put to such of the graduates as would be likely to answer them in the most satisfactory manner. Among these I would name Lt. Col. J. (ames) D. Graham, Prof. (Charles) Davies, T. (thomas) J. Leslie, H. (enry) Brewerton & Horace Webster. With regard to the studies & text books from 1817 to 1833 I may be able to specify them altho' in some cases not the precise time at which changes occurred. The requisite information in the last resort may be obtained from graduates after 1824 probably from Professors (Dennis) Mahan, (William H. C.) Bartlett & (Albert) Church & Bailey. An unerring guide as far as it goes would be the Table of studies & class books attached to each edition of the Academy Regulations. the first of which was published as well as I can remember somewhere about 1819 & the others at intervals of two or three years. The only one I have was printed in 1832. Will you please to inform me how many of them (the different editions) are now to be found at West Point. Very respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Captain Geo. W. Cullum
U. S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Boston 24th March 1854

My dear General,

I was rejoiced to hear that the Colonel (John Lind Smith)* was doing well. I hope to see him here soon in pristine health. It seems providential that you were near & could be so much with him during his illness. He thinks of that, I doubt not, many times every day. He has many warm sympathizing friends but there is a wide distinction between you & all others.

In overhauling my papers I have just met with the enclosed which may perhaps assist your memory. It is not the copy which was transmitted to me from the War Dept. - from which I made the extract in my last but one. It is a stray copy. How I came by it I can't remember. The endorsement might perhaps afford some clue if the handwriting can be recognised. That you recd. such a letter is as certain in my mind as any past event. The time when & the place where you shewed it to me & the substance of the several conversations I had with you on the subject are all fresh in my memory. It was at my suggestion & request you decided that I should remain at Brooklyn 'till the President (James Monroe)* should visit West Point in the hope that he would then think proper to revoke the order. During the time, near two months, I was there wa_ting I boarded at a house on the hill overlooking the Navy Yard from the West. You were at the same time cognizant of the Notice I had recd at Paris in Nov. 1816. That you have forgotten these things while I remember them so well is no proof that my general memory is better than yours but only that I had peculiar reasons for retaining them. However, the facts themselves are of no importance as far as I can see, so, let us say nothing more about them.

My friend Doctor (George C.) Shattuck* whose illness I mentioned in my last I saw enterred at Mt. Auburn on Tuesday last. He was one of the noblest & most perfect specimens of our race. We had been bound together by the closest ties over fifty years, I of course feel his loss most deeply. Your friend

S. THAYER

Genl. Jos. G. Swift

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Fort Warren

Boston Harbor August 6th 1854

My dear General.

Yours of the 3d is at hand. If it were possible I would have great pleasure in a visit to Sharon Springs to meet you & our friend (John L.) Smith* but it is not possible. I have two important works under my immediate charge but have neither an assistant or a general overseer. Consequently, I am compelled to be out on the works from Sunrise until sunset taking only half an hour at breakfast & an hour at dinner. At the end of the day I find my strength so exhausted as to be incapable of writing, or reading & almost of moving & worse than all the fatigue brings on a fever which lasts many hours after retiring to bed. I have indeed a nominal assistant & altho he has been with me near three years he has not qualified himself to render me any assistance whatever in the direction of the operations & very little or none in any other way. In case of my absence or illness operations must be suspended unless indeed an officer is sent to relieve me. Altho' unable to meet you at the Springs I shall not resign the hope of seeing you here & my happiness would be complete if you could persuade Smith to accompany you & spend a few days with me on the island. Your description of the Light House proposed for Nantucket shoals is perfectly clear as far as it goes but some additional details would be necessary to enable me to form a decided opinion of its merits. The principle seems to me a good one if the difficulties of putting it in place do not present insuperable objections. but more on the subject hereafter. Yours ever
S. THAYER
Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

(1855?)

My dear Sir,

Keeping no copies of my letters to you, I am really unable to say, strange as it may seem, whether I have, or have not, replied to the friendly request in one of your letters, that I would furnish you with some facts relating to my personal history before I went to West Point. I will therefore take this occasion to say, at the hazard of repeating myself, that I sincerely thank you & will take the matter under respectful consideration. I have ever felt great reluctance to put pen to paper on such a subject. If I ever do there is no one to whom I would more willingly confide a paper of the kind.

I am not less astonished than you are at the forgetfulness of the graduates. Genl. (Joseph G.) Totten never knew much about the early history of West Point. He was there only a few months in 1803-4 & never again I think till 1816 when he was there a few days as President of a Court of Inquiry on Capt. (Alden) Partridge. (Joseph G.) Swifts Memory seems almost entirely gone. I endeavored to procure from him a List of his fellow Cadets at West Point but he was unable to furnish a correct one. His reminiscences which he designed to have published in the Intelligencer & which he sent to me for perusal was a perfect chaos. Most of the facts being wrong or out of their proper places. For instance the marches of the Cadets all of which took place in 1818, 1819, 1820, & 1821 he represented as having occurred at a prior date & while the Academy was under his direction & other statements equally surprising his "diary" notwithstanding. I pointed out some of the prominent errors. Hence probably the delay of the publication. (Richard) Delafield & Co., as you may have seen, have gone to visit the (Cossecks). Yr. truly

S.T.

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

South Braintree May 15th 1855

My dear Genl.

Yours of the 9th came duly to hand. Doct. Hales biographical memoir of Capt. (David B.) Douglass* is probably designed as an Eulogy & so written as to best please the surviving family & relatives & as is customary in like compositions will exaggerate the good & keep out of sight the bad qualities of the subject. This is natural & not to be found fault with. We, however, who knew him cannot ignore his failings altho not unwilling to forgive & forget them. If indeed it were true that "the Academy was a chaos until his advent" it is difficult to conceive how his "advent" could have had much to do with the bringing it out of chaos seeing that his duties were simply those of a teacher & (at the time alluded to & for many years thereafter) a subordinate teacher, too, in one of the Departs. of instruction. His character as defined in your remarks given to Mr. Hale I deem correct in the main as far as it goes altho' there is room for difference of opinion as to the Captains "genius & taste" The former is variously defined by lexicographers. If imagination & power of invention are essential ingredients then his claim to it might, perhaps, be questioned. As to "Taste" "degustibus non disputandum," you know, "Talents" he certainly did possess in no common measure. He was an indefatigable student & capable of mastering any science yet from wont of perseverance & steadiness of mind he cannot be said to have reached the bottom of any one. If instead of skipping from one subject to another as was his habit, he had applied himself exclusively to a few subjects to which his talents were best adapted he would have been much more eminent & useful than he actually was. He was over five years asst. prof. of Nat. Phily. Three years prof. of Mathmtcs & seven years prof of Engineering & acquitted himself well in each & all of those spheres altho' he had not a happy manner of communicating his knowledge & was therefore less popular than some of his successors have been. As to his moral qualities there was a singular mixture & complication. He was addicted to no vice & exemplary as a man & a christian. He loved his children intensely & all that was his & himself too, The two "organs," as phrenologists would say, most prominent & develloped in him were, as I think, philoprogenitiveness & self esteem, or if you please, philself. & these were so predominant as to completely blind him. When disinterested he was a reasonable man but whenever his interests were concerned it was useless to reason with him. This trait is the secret of his disagreement with all who ever associated with him before he went to Geneva. I got along with him, probably, better than most did. I aimed to deal justly & liberally with him Nevertheless, he was generally dissatisfied & in bad humour because I would not grant him many priviledges & indulgencies which he claimed to be due him. Still there was no open war & I think he never regarded me as an enemy. On the whole he had more virtues & fewer faults than most men.

You say "some of our compeers at Washington are to be retired" I know not to whom you allude. You are aware that the Bill containing a provision for "retiring officers" failed to pass. & I know not how without law or their own consent officers can be "retired."

I am still uncertain what my movements will be during the summer but we must have a meeting somewhere if possible. Our Board was to have met in Newyork in the course of this month but one of the members (Richard) (Delafield)* having been sent abroad I am waiting to have the vacancy filled. With kindest regards to Mrs. Swift & all the members of the family I remain ever your affectionate friend
S. THAYER
Genl. J. G. Swift

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Boston June 15th 1855

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 9th (postmarked 10th) of June owing to my absence (at Ft. Warren) reached me only last evening. Before giving you the final result of my best reflections on some of the "vexed questions" I would be glad to understand, better than I now do, & with as much precision as possible, the exact points yet remaining to be cleared up in your mind. So far as relates to the Inspectorship all the facts bearing on it are ascertained or, if not, are ascertainable. All seem clear to me & if any doubts remain in your mind I flatter myself that I would be able to remove them. You speak of needing "help to define the positions of (besides Swift) Armistead etc" (meaning I suppose to include the successors of Armistead) I was not aware there were any doubts as to their positions or either of them. As to the Superintendency after all that may be said & done I would not be surprised if you finally concluded to adhere to the plan indicated as the best in your letter of April 16th as being the most simple & the only one not liable to serious objections. The more I consider it, the better I like it. It dodges the difficulty, certainly, but then, either you must dodge it, or, you will stumble over it & perhaps bark your shins or do worse. It relieves you from the necessity of deciding upon Swifts pretensions. By placing him in the same category with Col. Williams it leaves him no grounds for complaint.

I hope to collect information that will enable you to fill some of the gaps in your Register but to save time I append a list of the persons (indicated by numbers referring to your Register) to whom you should apply for information. The numbers in brackets are those in your letter of May 15th. The numbers annexed to each bracketed no. indicate the persons to be referred to.

I am not yet relieved of my anxiety about West Point. There are doubtless enough in the lower grades qualified for the position but of the field officers? no one I fear. Ever respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Capt. G. W. Cullum, U.S. Engrs.

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266, 269, 270, 271, 274. (275) 269, 271 274 (276) to himself
at Newyork, (280) 269, 271, 294, 293, (289) 286, 288, 290, 209,
301, (296) 294, 302, 310, 309, (317) 316, 322, (318) 300, 301,

306, 311, 313, (319) 309, 310, 313, 316, 322, (320) 309, 310,
313, 316, 322, (321) 290, 309, 310, 311, 313, (330) 326, 333,
334 (337) 327, 333, 334, 336, 339, 342, (340) 342, 343, 344,
348, 363. (349) 342, 344, 358 (354) 343, 348, 355, (357) 348,
355, 363, 374, (364) 326, 336, 365, 369, 370, 399 (367) 369,
370, 371, 372, 374, (376) omit "Insane Hospital" (377) 358, 361,
369, 370, 371, 374 (380) 370, 371 374, 387, 388. (383) 347,
385, 386, 387, 388, 389 (396) 233. (397) 399 (426) 416, 419,
(453) 429, 443, 448, 461, 472. (478) 472, 509. (484) 601 &
Genl. Bankhead (488) 430, 432, 490, 501 (504) 471, 502, 513, 520
(505) 502, 506, 513, 516, 520, (521) 473 520, 522, 527, 530.
Ethan A. Allen (22) was reported to have died at Norfolk last
summer or Autumn. In the Register of 1851 he was recorded as
dead was that correct?

TO George W. Cullum*

Boston June 28th '55 (1855)

My dear sir

Your letter of the (20th) is at hand, also that of the 22d communicating a transcript of Genl Swifts official letter advising me that "the Engineer Department is established at this place (Washington) & is charged with the inspection & correspondence of the Military Academy" This fixes the precise day on which the new office was created & shews it to have been April 7th 1818 (Same date as his private letter No. 35 his Correspondence) instead of April 15th (see Coresp. No 37) as I had previously conjectured.

I will now take up the "vexed questions" in the order they are propounded in your letter First. "How to arrange the first page" of the new Register? I continue to think that there is no better mode of arranging it than the one you have proposed, nor any that would probably be more satisfactory. Second. All things considered I don't see how you can well avoid putting down Genl. Swift (No 1) as you propose or how you can more truly define his connection with the Mily. Academy from 1812-13 to July 28th 1817 altho he did authorize or at least suffer another to usurp the title of Superintendent during a great part of the same time. It is certain that to him and him only appertained the powers & responsibilities without which, as I think, no one can rightfully be regarded as the Superintendent. But, can you put him down as Inspector also during any part of the same time? I think not for reasons heretofore assigned. besides, I can hardly suppose the Genl. would wish it as the empty title would add nothing to the importance of his position as Chief Engineer & Superintendent. I therefore agree with you that he should be noted as Inspector only from April 7th 1818.

Third. The Inspectorship was continuous from April 7th 1818 Consequently, Armisteads history (3) in the edition of 1850 is correct altho' he may never have made any visit of inspection at West Point

Fourth. Gratiot (16) & Totten (10) are also correctly down as Inspectors.

Fifth. If Swift (1) is down as Superintendent from 1812-13 to July 28th 1817 as he claims to have been a claim I would not be able to disprove; it follows of course that in the history of Partridge (15) you must omit "Superintendent of the Mily. Academy from Jany 3d 1815 to Nov. 25 1816 & from Jany. 13th 1817 to July 28th 1817" I have seen no evidence that Partridge was recognised as Superintendent by the War Dept. at any time, while correspondence No 2 & No 3 furnishes conclusive evidence to my mind that he could not have been so recognised at any time after Sept or Oct 1816. I am respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum U.S. Corps of Engr.

P.S. Will you bear it in mind to inform me in your next about what time you calculate to have your new edition of the Register ready for the printer. I regret extremely your past ill success in obtaining the requisite information but with patience & perseverance you will get it at last. So I hope & pray.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Extracts

Col. Thayer to Capt. Cullum June 28t 1855

(in reply to the question "how to arrange the first page)" "I do not well see, all things considered, how you can better define Genl. Swifts connection with the Mily Academy from 1812-13 to July 28th 1817 - than by putting him down as the Superintendent, although he did authorise, or at least suffer another to assume that title during a portion of the time. To him and to him only appertained the power and responsibilities without which no one can, as I think, be rightfully regarded as the Superintendent, but, if put down as the Superintendent how can he be put down as the Inspector during any part of the same time? To me that would seem a solecism; besides, as you justly remark, the appointment (of Inspector) conferred upon him no new powers, or perogatives, and you now know that the office, as defined in the order of Feby. 28th 1815, was wholly different, except in name, from the inspectorship of April 1818. The Genl himself, it seems to me, would not desire a title adding nothing to the importance of his position as Chief Engineer & Superintendent. I therefore think with you that he should be put down as Inspector only from April 7th 1818 x x x If Swift is put down as the Superintendent from 1812-13 to July 28th 1817 it follows, of course, that Partredges name must not appear on the list of Superintendents.

From Capt Cullums letter of July 4th 1855 in reply to the above

"Charleston S. C. July 4th 1855

"I have just recd. your letter of the 28th ult and am happy that we are agreed upon the long vexed questions" signed
Geo. W. Cullum

TO George W. Cullum*

Boston July 16th 1855

My dear Sir,

I have yours of July 5th with your "Circular" of July 1st. Among the questions in the latter is the following "After leaving the Army did you volunteer your services for the Mexican War or any other"? Your idea is, I suppose, that the act of volunteering is ipso facto is a highly meritorious act deserving an honorable mention. Whether it be so or not depends, I think, on the motive prompting it, on the condition or conditions annexed by the volunteer to the tender of his services, on his condition of life his business, domestic situation etc etc circumstances about which you cannot be supposed to know any thing. All who, in the Mexican War for instance, applied for places of whatever kind from that of General down to that of commissary or Sutler will tell you that they volunteered. Some even who did not volunteer, at least, at the proper time & in the proper manner & to the proper authorities, will think they did & you must take their word for it. These self styled volunteers may be grouped thus.

1st. Class supposed to consist of those who were without occupation, employment or means of decent or comfortable subsistence, also of those who, in whatever condition of life, tendered their services as generals or as Colonels etc. or who volunteered only by being candidates for some office or other by the possession of which their condition would have been materially bettered. If all the rejected volunteers were not of this class, the exceptions, I apprehend, were few indeed.

2d Class consisting of those, if any, who disregarding emoluments were actuated solely or mainly by ambition, a desire to gain distinction & fame. This altho' a selfish class might deserve consideration if the individuals could be pointed out.

3d. Those, especially if in affluent or easy circumstances, who made known their willingness to serve in any capacity high or low without conditions. These self sacrificing & patriotic individuals would doubtless deserve a place in history but is it to be supposed that these or those of the second Class were rejected if not from some fault of their own? Whence then their claim of honorable distinction?

Granting, however, for arguments sake, that the rejected volunteers were a meritorious class it may yet well be questioned whether they were better men or better patriots than other graduates who, for good & imperative reasons, did not volunteer & whom you propose to punish by an invidious distinction. While gratifying a few will you not give offense - just offense - to the many? I might go on fortifying the position but spare you the infliction. I designed to say a word on another subject analogous to this but from want of time must improve another occasion to say it. Respectfully & truly yours S. THAYER
Capt. Geo. W. Cullum U.S. Corps of Engineers
P.S. Prof. (Dennis H.) Mahan* was with me at Fort Warren several days last week, & took occasion to speak of you in the highest & warmest terms. If it depended on him you would be the Superintendent at West Point.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Boston July 20th '55 (1855)

My dear Sir,

I took up to day your Register of 1850 & altho I have looked it over as only as No 33 of graduates I send herewith notes of such errors as I have observed with the corrections I would recommend, No 373 you adopted or rather copied from my Register. Altho F. De Massons resignation was probably not accepted till the time there recorded viz 1812 it would be falsifying the history of the Acady to put him down as Teacher of French during the years he was not there or even in the United States. I am under the impression that there are errors of the like kind in the cases of Crozet & Douglass. Mahan can tell whether the latter officiated after the Term ending July 1st. 1830. If not, then, I would say there is a slight correction to be made altho it may be true that he recd the emoluments of the office to March 1831. My impression however, may be wrong altogether as to the fact & indeed must be if No 18 be correct. I hope to find time to complete the examination so as to give you the result ere it be too late. Ever truly yours S. THAYER
Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
U. S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Boston Augt. 1st, 1855

My dear Sir,

Yours of July 24th is recd. I have looked over the remainder of the book & send herewith a Note of the few corrections etc I can point out. No 423 died in the McLean Hospital for the Insane where he had been nine years but that circumstance you will of course not mention in the Register. When you have obtained all the information you will be likely to get from others please send me a list of such items as may be wanting in order that I may if possible suggest means of supplying the deficiency. As to "volunteering for the wars" I am glad to know that you will "weigh the matter well before publishing the Register." We agree as to the end altho' we may not as to the means. We wish if possible the public to believe that the graduates in civil life stand ready at the call of the country to re enter the Army & the only question is whether what was proposed to be done is calculated to favor that belief or to counteract it. This may depend on the number who volunteered which may be much greater than I have supposed. Besides this there is another question. Will not the inference be irresistable that those who did not volunteer were at best less patriotic than those who did & would thus have a black mark fixed upon them? You say "I do not think it would appear any more a stigma upon them than upon many officers who were prevented (how prevented?) from going to Mexico" etc. To me the two cases seem widely different. An officer who volunteers, when volunteers are not called for, would probably get in return only a good rap over the knuckles. Why should you (or any officer) feel "mortification" because you had no opportunity of winning honors in Mexico?" There may be cause for regret, certainly, but none for "mortification". as far as I can see. If any officer has cause for "mortification" it is he who having been present in a battle or in battles received neither a wound, or a brevet or an honorable mention by his commander or other mark or testimonial to which he could refer with pride. It is only such as he, I think, who will ask you to put them down as present in some battle. You see I am a bold "volunteer" so far as regards my opinions on all subjects which I hope you will excuse Ever truly yours S. THAYER
Capt. Geo. W. Cullum U.S. Corps of Engrs.

80 Died in Newyork in 1825

86 Died at Ft. Schuyler last winter. Capt. Dutton can state the day & month.

153 Died in service at Watertown Arsenal May 6th 1855

171 Died in Washington city

191 Died in service some time last Winter

193 Died at Sabine city Texas July 16th 1840. His profession was that of Civil Engineer

376 It is submitted for consideration whether it would not be well to omit "in Insane Hospital" etc

402 Prof. Mathematics etc in Naval Acady Annapolis since-

423 Died at Somerville (near Boston) or say Boston (where he was born) Jany 1855

*See Index

(TO George W. Cullum*)

(Aug. 1, 1855?)

Officers

No. 13 Having declined was never one of "the officers of the U.S. Military Academy" & therefore has no claim to a place in the Register

67 Believed to be incorrect. He could not have been at W.P. in 1805. He probably left in 1803.

218. To be omitted for the same reason as 13

N.B. In Dept. of Inf. Tactics insert "G. W. Gardiner Acting Instructor of Infantry Tactics & Commandant of Cadets from Sept 15th 1817 to 2d April 1818"

373 Incorrect. Francis de Masson was not Teacher of French at West Point certainly not after 1808, nor, I am pretty sure, after 1807. His brother Florimond being there in his place.

N.B The first name under the Heading "Surgeons" should be John Watson appointed 22d Nov. 1803. Died at W.P. 31st May 1812

398 Incorrect. Altho Asst. Surgeon of the Army he was acting Surgeon at West Point he being the only medical officer there. His proper place is immediately after Cutbush whom he relieved.

425 Incorrect. Relieved May 17th 1824, by Capt. Mackay. From that time while there he was in arrest.

426. 427. One or the other incorrect. Both were not acting as Q. Master at the same time. To the best of my recollection Mackay was on duty at Fort Monroe from May to Sept. 1828.

Graduates

1 Omit "Director of the Mil. Acad" etc & insert Superintendent. Mil. Acady from 1813 to July 27, 1817 - Inspector of the Mil. Acady. from April 7th 1818 to Nov. 12th 1818

2 & 4 Genl. Swift must be able to inform you when & where they died

9 Commander of the Artillery (a Battalion consisting of four companies) in the right Division of the Army under the command of Major General Wade Hampton in the Campaign of 1813

15. Omit "Superintendent" etc

22 is put down as dead which must have been incorrect at the time. From a notice I saw in the National Intelligencer it appears that he died at Norfolk Va. sometime last Autumn or Winter. For the facts apply to Col. Smith or Genl. Bankhead at Fort Monore

26 Died at Caledonia Illinois March 14th 1846. His widow Eliza G. Post is living with her son Doctor Post at Alton Ill. & if applied to will furnish any desired facts connected with the history of her late husband. He was a man of more than ordinary talents & acquirements in Science, particularly Mathematics which he continued to (calibrate) all his life.

33. "Degree of A. M. conferred by Dartmouth College 1810 & by Harvard University 1825, of L.L.D. conferred by St. Johns College Md. 1830 by Dartmouth College 1846 & by Harvard University 1851" etc etc

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Fort Warren Aug. 4th 1855

My dear Sir,

Bah! I have made a grand discovery. I thought I was a Pasha with three tails only but lo! I have four at least. How many more can't say. In the Triennial Catalogues of Dartmouth & harvard of 1852 & 1854 I was put down as L.L.D. conferd. by Kenyon College Ohio but supposed it to be a mistake as I had never been notified of the apointment. It was a fact however. I have just recd the Triennial Catalogue of Kenyon College in which I find my name among those upon whom the College had conferred that honor if honor it be. It was conferred in 1846 at a time when it was probably supposed to be absent from the United States & therefore not notified, So put me down accordingly inserting the honor next after that from St. Johns College Md & immediately before that from Dartmouth. Have just recd yours of July 28 but must defer my reply till I go out to Braintree where are all my papers relating to West Point. Yours truly
S. THAYER
Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

(TO George W. Cullum*)

(August 5, 1855)

No. 13 & 218. I gave you my opinion because you invited it, not that I was anxious to have it adopted or that I deemed the corrections of much moment. In fact it matters little whether the names of L'Enfant & Jones are retained or dropt, so very little that no more words need be wasted on the subject. As I have often occasion to say "le jeu ne vaut pas la cha_delle" I must say, however, that the precedent & authorities you have cited seem to me not pertinent to the question at issue which, I cannot but think, you have entirely misconceived. The Register of the Officers of the Military Academy was not originally designed to be, & as I think, ought not to be a List of persons appointed to fill offices at the Academy but of the persons who actually filled them. I say "ought not to be" for who cares to know who "declined:" or what new luster would the Academy derive from making known the fact that certain persons refused to be connected with the Institution whether from disdain or any other motive. Accordingly every Register published before yours was designed, & even yours purports, to contain the names of those only who had been officers of the Academy, or, in other words, who had actually filled offices at the Academy. Now the real question is were L'Enfant & Jones officers of the Academy for an instant of time. To say that they would be telling an egregious whopper. If so, then to put them down as such in the Register would be stating a false fact or in your words "falsifying history". n'est ce pas? If you were going to make a Register of the Cadets of the Military Academy would you insert the names of the hundreds who "declined"? I am sure you would do no such thing.

No. 108. I returned to West Point about the middle of Nov. 1809 Mr Hassler had left & gone to Union College as a professor

121. The date should be June 5th 1811 instead of April 29th 1812

198. Hopkins is right, I think.

372 You are doubtless right as to the name. I last saw him in Nov. 1807. I left in April 1808 & returned in Nov. 1809. I can say positively that he was never at West Point after the time last mentioned. & I firmly believe that he was never there after 1807 but you can easily settle that question by writing to Abert, Adam Larabee, Cobb, Loomis & Ezra Smith & probably by writing to Abert only. Ask them to answer the following question. Was Francis D. Masson teacher of French at West Point at any time while you were a Cadet? If so state during what time & put also the same question only substituting Florimond for Francis D.

373. "Doctors do not "disagree" as much as you are led to suppose. Most of the apparent discrepancies may be accounted for by the fact that Florimond acted as the substitute of his brother & signed the pay rolls as his agent from the time the latter left West Point until March 31st 1812 when his resignation was accepted at the War Department. Unless you succeed in obtaining better information you may venture to put down Francis D. Masson as Teacher of French from March 27th 1804 (perhaps from July 12th 1803) to 1st. April 1808 & Florimond Masson as Teacher of French from April 1st. 1808 to Jany. 3d 1815.

No Watson should be put down under the heading Surgeons above Walsh & opposite his name in Column headed "Army rank" put "Surgeons Mate" & in column headed "Term of Service" from Nov 2d 1803 to May 31st 1812.

No 423. Stanton was the first Quarter Master of the Academy & should stand at the head of the list. Before him the Senior officer of Engineer commanding usually performed that duty. Neither Perkins or Van de Venter or Blaney or Leslie should be on the list as quartermasters of the Academy. I doubt whether either of the two first named were ever permanently stationed at West Point. However that may be I am quite sure they were not attached to the Mily. Acady. as Quartermasters. The office was first created on my recommendation in 1817 altho' not filled 'till May 1818. Blaney & Leslie acted merely as assistants to the comdg Engineer but were in no proper sense quarter Masters of the Academy

Graduates

No 4 is of a Boston family. I once knew a brother of his now dead. I will make enquiry

No. 33 Insert in its proper place Degree of L.L.D. conferred by Kenyon College Ohio 1846

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Ft. Warren Augt. 18th '55 (1855)

My dear Sir

Yours of the 11th is at hand. As I am suffering from a bad cold, my reply will be very brief. In reference to Watson I meant Nov 22d 1803 & not Nov. 2d - Swifts degree of L.L.D. was conferrd by Kenyon College in 1843. By the way the Doctor is to here himself in the course of next week & will probably stay several weeks so that if you wish me to pump him I will do so but you must give me the cue; that is, say what you want me to get out of him. He shall not know that I am prompted by you. I doubt whether I can get much but will try.

In a former letter I said that Lymon Foot should be transferrd from the List of Assistant Surgeons to that of Surgeons & placed next after Everett

I have not yet found time to answer fully your requirements relative to the Graduates who served in the War of 1812. From your Register of 1850 it appears

1st. The number commissioned prior to the War of 1812 was 88.
(Abert not commissioned) ----- 88

2d Died prior to the War 2,4,5,13,43,47,49, 84 ---8

3d (Living but out of service, 16, 14, 20, 24, 25, 30, 35, 38,
(42, 45, 48, 50, 52, 70, 73, -----15 23

4th In service at the commencement of the War of 1812 = 65

Of these it is known that 37 were in presence of the enemy viz:
1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37,
40, 41, 44, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 67, 69, 72, 75, 76, 79,
80, 81, 82, 87, 88, & 89 & perhaps some others.

5th Killed in battle 17, 34, 41, 53, 56, 67, 69, 72, 75, &
87. Total = 10

Wounded, 67 at Tipecanoe in 1811, killed in 1812, - 40, 55, 89.

6th Killed & wounded. Total-----13

7th Brevetted for gallant or meritorious services, 1, 9 two
brevets - 10 three brevets - 12-17 two brevets - 33 two brevets
- 88 two brevets - 89 two brevets. Total brevets 15 Total
brevetted 8

8th Killed, wounded & brevetted 1, 9, 10, 12, 17, 33, 34, 40,
41, 53, 55, 56, 67, 72, 75, 87, 88, 89, - Total 18

When you receive orders for Newyork please inform me so that I
may write to you there Respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum U.S. Corps of Engrs.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Fort Warren Sept 30th '55 (1855)

My dear sir,

Having been absent several weeks yours of Sept 9th reached me only on the 24th. Genl. (Joseph G.) Swift* had gone so that I could not sound him on the points mentioned in your letter. As to Jacob (Barker)* I know what the General thinks & can account for his favorable opinions of him. Nevertheless his is a character _____ . His name should never appear in connection with the history of the Mily Academy. I was glad to know that your Register is ready for publication but regret extremely the delay with which it is threatened. I cannot but think however that you will soon receive the desired permission.

Yours with great regard

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum

U.S. Corps of Engrs

*See Index

TO Joseph G. Swift*

Fort Warren Oct. 26th 1855

My dear General,

By your letter to your brother from Brooklyn I learned your movements from the time we separated at New Bedford & your illness at Nantucket brot on, I apprehend, by our long & rapid march before breakfast in search of your uncle Delano's ancient abode. You will not, I hope, again venture on such a journey unaccompanied by Mrs. Swift or your daughter.

The thought that we shall meet again next summer & that Mrs. Swift will be with us is to me delightful to dwell upon & may a kind Providence interpose no obstacle to its realization!

You have, doubtless, read the Report of Marshal Pelisier (Aimable Jean Jacques Pelissier)* dated Sept. 14th & perhaps the graphic narrative filling 12 columns of the London Times but as you may not have seen Genl. Niels Report I subjoin some extracts. "I am going to state (Je vais vous rendre compte) the dispositions made in order to diminish as as much as possible the numerous difficulties presented in this terrible assault, not on a plan invested, but on a vast fortress defended by an army as numerous perhaps as that which attacked it." Our trenches (cheménimers) had arrived to within 40 metres of the Central Bastion, - 30 metres of the Bastion du Mât - 25 metres of the Enceinte surrounding the Malakoff & of the Little Redan. This "beau resultat" was due to the incontestable superiority of our Artillerie over that of the Enemy" It had extinguished the fire of all the guns which looked upon our attacks & the pieces not seen directly had their embrasures filled up & every where the earthworks (terrassements) had lost their primitive forms" "In order to pass the ditches which had a great depth (20 ft) we contrived a system of bridges capable of being put in place in less than a minute by an ingenious menoeuvre to which our sappers & "soldat' d'elite" had been exercised. These bridges were very useful to us" All the other preparations for the assault on the part of the French seem to have been perfect. The means taken to conceal the advance of the attacking columns from their encampment & the rear to the parallels & Place' d'Armes nearest the points of attack & to deceive the enemy as to the time of the assault were perfectly successful. In conclusion Genl. Neil says. "Thus terminated this memorable siege in which the means of the Defense & those of the attack attained "colossal proportions" - "The Russians had more than 800 guns in battery & a garison the force & composition of which they caused to vary at pleasure" "The besieging army had in battery 700 pieces which fired one million & six hundred thousand shots. Our trenches (cheminemers) executed mostly in rock by blasting (au mogen de la poudre) present a developement of more than 80 kilometres (over 50 miles) We employed 80,000 (gabions), 60,000 (Eascines) & a million of sand bags. Never had the Corps of Engineers executed works so difficult & multiplied & in no siege had it experienced so great losses. Among the killed were one General (Begot) one Lt. Col. (Guérin) 6 chiefs of Batalion 20 Captains & 3 Lieutenants. In all 31 killed & 34 wounded "Two companies of Sappers are commanded each by its fourth) Captain, the three first having been killed at its head"

The development of the English trenches is not stated but could not have exceeded a tenth of the French. nor have I seen a statement of their loss in Engineer officers. The number of killed & wounded Engr. Officers French & English amounted probably to somewhere about 90 - On the side of the English their trenches had not advanced nearer than 220 yards nor does it appear that a single gun had been silenced either in the Great Redan or in the other (batteries) that swept the open space over which their storming party had to pass. Nevertheless had their dispositions for the assault been as skillful as were those of the French & their troops as well commanded I can see no reason why the Great Redan might not have been carried & maintained. The loss on the 8th according to the official Reports of their respective commanders was as follows. English 2427 French 7551. Russian 11,690. Gortschakoff (Prince Mikhail Dimitrievich Gorchakov) does not state his total loss during the Bombardment from the 5th to the 8th but says. "We had hors de combat officers 51. - Soldiers = 3, 917 besides Artillerists the number of whom that perished was so great that it was with difficulty they could be replaced." In another Report he acknowledges a loss on the 7th of 2500 which is probably the average loss on each of the 3 days. This makes the loss of the Russians from the 5th to the 8th inclusive 19,200. He states his loss on Aug. 17th at 1500 & 1000 per day to the 22d & from that time to Sept. 5th from 500 to 600 per day. This would make his loss according to his own statement from Aug. 17th to Sept. 8th = 32,850 at least

With best regards to Mrs. Swift & daughter I am as ever
yours
Genl. J. G. Swift

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Boston Decr. 18th 1855

My dear Sir

For some weeks past I have been wondering why I had not heard from you & was about to write when I recd yours of the 10th. The decision of Secretary (Jefferson) Davis* of which you justly complain, altho' I would never have imagined it as probable or possible, creates no astonishment or surprise, it being characteristic of the man. Neither he or my opinion of him has changed since I knew him as a cadet. Accordingly I have taken good care to ask nothing of him for myself or others or to have submitted to him any matter with regard to which he could suppose I took an interest. If I am not deceived he intends to leave his mark in the Army & also at West Point & a black mark it will be I fear. He is a recreant & unnatural son, would have pleasure in giving his Alma Mater a kick & would disown her, if he could, I think. There is some excuse for him, however, He feels sore. His career at West as exhibited in the indelible records of the Institution was not such as he can look back upon with pride or satisfaction or even without mortification. When admitted he was between 17 & 18 years of age the average age of his class being under 17 yet on every merit roll he stood among the lowest third of his class. At the end of his third year there were only five below him. His standing on the Conduct rolls is still less flattering, his demerits in the year he graduated being 189 within eleven of the fatal number Hence doubtless his hostility to the system of Discipline at West Point & especially to the "Reports of Demerit". In a letter from Major (John G.) Barnard* he says, "In relation to some proposed modifications of one or two paragraphs of the Regulations suggested by me the Secy of War endorsed "The Superintendent will be invited to state the modifications suggested. It is deemed desirable to confine the Reports of Demerit to offenses which effect the discipline of the Academy & the military training of the Cadets" & the Chief Engineer adds, "you will accordingly prepare & forward your views of adviseable modifications of the existing Regulations & of a Demerit system adapted to the Class of offenses designated by the Secretary" Whereupon Major Barnard remarks "The Secretary's language is rather vague. Offenses which affect the discipline of the Academy & the military training of the Cadets seem to me to include all now recognised, unless indeed those strictly academical (comparatively few in number) are included. But whatever the exact meaning of his words, my impression is, from his remarks on other occasions, that he looks ultimately, if not to be understood so in the above words, to something like a revision of the system." So you see that the system which has stood near forty years is at length to be overthrown "de fond en comble". No opposition will, as far as I know, come or perhaps could come from Barnard. None, I take for granted, will come from General (Joseph G.) Totten.* He is perfectly pliable. I am exceeding

sorry for the obstacle thrown in the way & so will be every graduate the Secretary alone excepted. But your labor will not be lost altho the publication may perhaps be delayed till the Secy quits office unless, as I hope may be the case, you can make a satisfactory arrangement with the Superintendent of the Academy for its earlier publication.

I shall send you a few more papers whenever I shall be advised that you have resumed your history.

My old enemy has made no attack upon me thus far this winter & my health is pretty good. With sincere regards & wishing you a merry Chirstmas & happy new year I am as ever
yours

S. THAYER

Capt. Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engineers

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