

FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Brooklyn 23d. Jany. '62 (1862)

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Dear friend,

It was my intention to have written to you about our friend Genl. (Winfield) Scott* but I thought I would wait for those Military thoughts that your letter before I left Geneva promised. -

The Genl. did not see the Emperor* (Nap. III) tho' he had often & pleasant intercourse with the Prince* (Prince of Wales) who feels full of favour to our Union - a pleasant talk tween Genl. (John A.) Dix* & Genl. Scott on the subject of the letter of the latter, in which Dix was very eloquent & sound & we renewed our old acquaintance - Genl. S. is far better in aspect & in appetite than in limb & real health - that injury in the Spine will I fear shorten his days - he thinks we may sojourn a week or two at Elizabeth Town & so have country air & his little carriage for two - I shall do my best to promote this 'tho am doubtful of bringing it about - His opinion of Gen. (George B.) McClellan* as the most suitable chief is clear & is so given recently to the President (Abraham Lincoln)* - The news from Kentucky makes (P.G.T.) Beauregard* look South - but there is no strong ground to the side of the Roanoke until West of Guilford C. (ourt) H. (ouse) - any effort to move West to sustain the Rebels there would be of no useful result beyond some delay - the movement of General (Ambrose) Burnside* on No. Carolina, if not to threaten Richmond - may cut both ways, & do not much good unless N. C. be sick of secession?

I am trying to promote my grandsons (Joseph Gardner Swift)* entry at West Point & have ventured to tell the facts to the President about the \$63,000 loan that I operated in 1815 at 7 percent when Treasury Notes were at 20 below par & which saved West Point from at least a temporary disbandment - & kept our Workmen on the Forts in this Harbour - an act 'tho gladly done was never compensated by any charge of percentage on my part. I am not sure that reading long letters may not be onerous & so am brief - with my daughters (Sally Swift)* & Mr. (Peter) Richards* Respects to you
Your friend
J. G. SWIFT

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Brooklyn 14 feb. '62 (1862)

Dear friend,

I wrote yesterday to Wm. (William H. Swift)* for an account of exactly how you were 'tho your lines of 8th be cheerful, of your being in good hands, & allowing me to infer your getting on promisingly - I want to know how you are at all points, & I say we for Sally (Swift)* is as anxious as myself, -

The news from the West & (South) will be a help to you, - the wretched South must begin to see into what a Hell of a place they have permitted a few Infernal Scoundrels to lead them. -

Genl. (Winfield) Scott* is comfortable, he was with us recently & then at Genl. Davies* with his Brothers Charles* & Henry* - Our best wishes are for You J. G. SWIFT
Have neither seen nor heard from Major (Thomas J.) Leslie!*

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Brooklyn 26 Feb '62 (1862)

Dear friend,

On reading your good account of yourself I went over to tell the Genl. (Winfield Scott?)* & it was a comfort to him he expresses to me a very high estimate of you & Respects you & has much affection for you, - I said what shall I say - say we three have similar estimates of each other - but sometimes I hear him say I never hear from Col. Thayer - I tell him you are not a punctual correspondent save to one or two ladies -- I have not been to see that Major (Thomas J.) Leslie* for a great while & so he punishes me, but I mean to go soon -- Genl. Scotts friends do him wrong his nature is so social that they omit to think of his weak health & offer him too many good things & then comes on constipation - I said yesterday choose between easy bowels & that - if the former take three times a day some rye or oatmeal hasty pudding & stick to it for at least a week at a time. When pain leaves his legs they swell & that is a bad symptom When I go over to him we have a nice safe dinner all alone we two & then alls safe for the time.

On the score of that B. R. lie he says I have asked them to print what I said - it would sustain Col. T. in his opinion amply - (true) I did wrong in consenting & when the Battle was going on I could not arrest it before they both came to a panic - I told him my lack of faith in Mr. (D)'s ability & that I was not alone by 100s--Enough for this time Your

J. G. SWIFT

The roof of my house at Geneva has been crushed by snow, but whats that to the escape of (John B.) Floyd* & (Albert) Sidney Johnston*?

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

P. S. The part cut off was a
repetition - by mistake -
about Jo. G. S.

Geneva 23d July '62 (1862)

Dear Colonel,

I sometimes think your long silence may be owing to a fear that you may get a long or wrong-winded Response involving you in some necessity of Rejoinder? I wrote you last Fall, & again in the Winter about Genl. (Winfield) Scott,* & in the Spring, when you were getting over the broken bones, You wrote me a brief note that you would make up for lost time as soon as you got mended - Well I have waited until I am tired. -- I have been much with Genl. Scott in the City & at Elizabeth Town & had many talks - He says the main error in the Southern Mind is ignorance of the North; - I saw him safe at Mr. (William B.) Cozzens* early in June & came home with Sally (Swift)* & Mr. (Peter) Richards* on 10th June. -- We have many democrats here & other haters of Mr. (William H.) Seward,* who seem willing to risque the Union for the sake of Party - they say we should "come to terms with the South" -- I ask them what can we do until they lay down their arms? & I tell them Jeff. Davis* said to the French Minister who advised Peace. "We are too high or too low to offer terms."

My Brother William (H. Swift)* is at Sharon Springs & we have just recd. a Telegram from Genl. (Joseph G.) Totten* that my grandson Jo G. (Swift)* is a Cadet & goes to West Point 28th Augt.

Both families here join in every good wish for you Your
friend
J. G. SWIFT

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FROM Samuel M. Mansfield*

Middletown Conn.
26th Sept. 1862.

Dear Colonel,

Mother desires me to write and express to you her gratification for your tender sympathy in her behalf.

We have met with a great loss and cannot realize our situation at present as we could had he been more at home. In our future troubles we shall not have him to look to for help and advice. Then we shall miss him.

I regret exceedingly I could not have been with him in his last hours. Sickness had kept me from him for about five weeks and upon my arrival in Washington on Tuesday while making my preparations to join him and seeking his whereabouts the sad news of Wednesday that General (Joseph K. F.) Mansfield* was mortally wounded sent a chill through me. I immediately made every endeavour to learn the truth of it. I saw the President (Abraham Lincoln)* and Secy. of War (Edwin M. Stanton)* but neither could give me further information. Lieut. Norton who had just arrived from Suffolk and was about to join Father was with me and went immediately to the Battle ground in search of him, while I remained, fearing that, should I leave I might miss him as it happened Lieut. Norton did.

Friday morning I intercepted at the War Dept. a dispatch from Capt (Clarence Hopkins) Dyer* his Aid, dated Frederick, to Mother saying that he should leave that morning with the remains of the Genl.

I left Washington in the afternoon and met Capt. Dyer with the remains at the Relay House. Also Mr. (Benjamin?) Douglas* of Middletown who had come on upon learning the news of his death.

I enclose to you a copy of notes made by Mr Douglas on the cars taken fresh from Capt Dyer's memory.

Mother is quite uneasy to think that he should say nothing special of his family, after being informed by his Surgeon that he could not live. That he should leave no message. I tell her that his mind was fixed upon the Battle, that he gave up family and all that could be dear to him even his life, for his Country - I feel proud to think that I had such a Father. and his life has been an example that I shall not feel ashamed to imitate.

It would be gratifying to Mother and myself if you would write an Obituary notice We feel that you (who have know him so long and intimately) can best give to the public his character as a Soldier and Friend. Very Respectfully
Your Obt. Servt.

SAMUEL M. MANSFIELD

Col. Sylvanus Thayer
South Braintree Mass.

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FROM (Benjamin?) Douglas*

(26 Sept. 1862)

General (Joseph K. F.) Mansfield* left Washington accompanied by his Aid Capt Dyer* and body Servant, on Saturday the 13th of Sept. 1862, At about 4 o'clock P.M. on horse back. arrived at Middletown Maryland on Monday the 15th at 9 o'clock A.M. and reported here to Genl (George B.) M.Clellan* as ordered, and was then assigned to the Command of Genl (Nathaniel P.) Banks* Corps of 11,000 men of two Divisions (Genls (Alpheus S.) Williams* and (Stearns)* (James Shields?)* and on the morning of Wednesday the 17th he lead them forth to action, at about 7. o'clock and had been out an hour or so engaged when at the head of his troops, urging on one of the new or "raw" regiments, which needed some encouragement, as they were timid, being under their first fire, and the firing of the enemy was very heavy of both Infantry and Artillery.

He was shot with a minie ball thro. the right lung, passing clear through him, so that he literally bled to death. His horse was shot dead at the same time, three balls passing through him. The General lived 24 hours, he conversed freely most of the time, was under the influence of opiates some of the time. Was constantly inquiring how the Action was going, and after the other officers, as to their safety etc. Having it reported to him at one time that Genls (Ambrose E.) Burnside* & (Joseph) Hooker* both were killed he lifted up his hands and exclaimed "Too bad" "Too bad". "Poor Fellows" "Poor Fellows". Being afterward told it was not so he seemed much gratified and relieved. Enquired several times how the Battle was going, and when told in our favor was much pleased. He gradually grew weaker and weaker and sent love to all his friends wished to be remembered to all, and to have his remains taken home. Wanted Capt Dyer to stay by him all the time until his death.

Doct. (Anselum) Surgeon of the Corps, and Docts Porter and Weeks (the latter of the Navy) were all very attentive to him. He had the best of care and attention and went off quietly as one going to sleep.

He expired on Thursday morning at 8 o'clock and ten minutes. His remains were immediately taken by Capt Dyer and put into a rough box and carried in an ambulance from the place (which was between Cadysville and Sharpsburg) to Monocacy Station near Frederick where they took the Cars for Baltimore.

He seemed impressed with the idea that he should be killed as he had expressed to several persons that he should never come out of the fight alive. He told Hon Ely Thayer* in Washington just as he was leaving there that he was going into the field and did not expect to come back alive and desired him to have his body recovered and sent home to his friends in Middletown.

Capt Dyer was not with the General at the moment he fell, he having been ordered back by the General to bring on Genl (George Henry) Gordon's* Brigade to their support. Genl Mansfield was at the time he fell at the head of Genl. (Samuel Wylie) Crawford's* Brigade. As he fell he was immediately caught up in the arms of five of the privates (from one of our Regiments next to him) also by the Surgeon of one of the Penn. Regiments and carried back about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile to the rear, where he was put into an ambulance and carried back about $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile further to a hospital (made from a old Farm House) where he was attended to by the Chief Surgeon of the Corps and had the best of care. Capt. Dyer his aid was with him in about 20 minutes after he fell and remained over him constantly until he expired. He required opiates to quiet his pains. His last moments after he could no longer talk audibly from loss of blood, seemed spent in Prayer as occasional expressions could be understood such as "My Lord," and "Father in Heaven" into thy hands" etc. seeming perfectly resigned to God's Will.

He was conscious from near the first that he could not live. But as he expressed it when told by his Surgeon, he could not survive, "It is God's Will it is all right" Arriving in Baltimore at about 8 o'clock in the evening of Friday Sept 19th with the Generals remains we were met by Genl. (John Ellis) Wool's* Aid with a detachment of Cavalry to perform Escort duty to the remains taking them into a hearse drawn by a fine team they escorted them to the Embalmer's Room a mile or so from the Depot and offered another escort when the remains were ready to leave the next day. The Rail Road to Philadelphia was thrown open to the remains free, as well as to those who accompanied the same.

The body was found by the Embalmer to be too far gone (decomposition having commenced) to admit of being embalmed, and was put in an air tight metallic case. At Phila the Agent of the Camden & Amboy line to New York, with tears in his eyes gave us a whole car for the remains free to N. Y. and offered to do all in his power to assist in forwarding the remains and said he felt it as a personal loss. We the Country had but few such men to lose as Mansfield. Arriving in N. Y. we were met by Col. J. H. Almy* the Connect State Ag. tendering most kindly an escort, Hearse, Carriages etc to convey the remains to the Governors Room at the City Hall there to lay in State for a day, that the Son's of Connecticut and other citizens of N. Y. might have the honor of paying their respects to the noble dead, but we could only thank them and decline stopping as we had arranged to be home.

Col. Almy accompanied the remains and friends to the New Haven Depot (taking them in a fine hearse drawn by four horses furnished by Col. Almy) arrived at New Haven Depot at $7\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock in the evening of Saturday where we were met by two Gentlemen a committee from the Board of Aldermen of the City of New York, requesting that the remains of Genl. Mansfield might be taken

back to the City Hall to lay in State there that the Citizens of New York might have an opportunity of paying some proper tribute of respect to his remains. We had to decline yet they were very urgent and said that General Mansfield was not Connecticut's man alone but the Country's man, and they wished to show to the country that they loved him.

The N. Y. N. H. & Hartford R. Roads opened free to our passage with remains to Meriden where we arrived at about 12 o'clock Saturday night the 20th and took carriages for Middletown with the remains arriving here at half past 3 o'clock on Sabbath morning, Sept. 21st. depositing the remains in the Town Hall, placing them under guard of a detachment from the 24th Regt Conn. Militia in Camp here.

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Geneva 14 Oct. '62 (1862)

Dear friend,

Your response of 9th Aug came duly & Jo(seph) G. (Swift)* was mighty pleased with your purpose of interest in his course & conduct at West Point - tho rather fearful he might not come up to your mark & tells his Mother she expects too much from him.

You promised in your last to keep me advised of how you got on with your bones & am fearful the healing process does not go on as rapidly as I had hoped.

Our friend Genl. (Winfield) Scott* on 8th of this month deposited the remains of his wife (Maria Mayo Scott*) who died 10th June in Rome & her body brought recently to New York & entombed, in St. Thomas Burial ground corner of Broadway & Houston Street age 72 years, - people used to make remarks on the connubial state of these my friends - I knew them both intimately & tho very earnest disputants they had an high estimate of the minds of each other & a strong affection, 'tho from both being strong minded they sometimes appeared a little too earnest to sustain each their opinions, - I once told them a story of Rev. Mr. Stone who when he married a couple used to say to the Bride & Groom "be careful that both of you do not get out of temper at the same time," -- Mrs. Scott was a very interesting person, had been very highly educated - read Latin fluently & spoke French & Italian as a native. The journal of that ladies travels in Europe I have read in M. S. & the remarks of Eustace & (Mrs.) Eaton were not more accurately nor more elegantly expressed; - Her countrymen did not treat her like chivalier men - they took from the Bank in Richmond all her deposits - \$7000 - so that Genl. Scott had to sustain two establishments out of his \$10,000 a year, one in Europe & his own in the U. S. - so much for secession!

My Brother (William H. Swift*) as you know has sold out & left Boston on account of the climate worrying his throat - but has not yet advised me that he has found a House to his mind in the City N. Y. - Sally (Swift*) & Willy (Jonathan Williams Swift*) & Belle (Isabella Swift*) unite with me in Respects & Regards, Mr. (Peter) Richards* is in the City
Your friend
J. G. SWIFT
P. S. We expect to go to the City 15th - 25th Nov.

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Geneva 11. Nov. '62 (1862)

Dear friend,

Not hearing from or of you makes me fear that writing must be painful to you - its due our relations to keep you advised of how this family may be, - Brother Wm. (H. Swift)* has gone through a severe throat attack at the Clarendon & by excision & excoriation is about again & seeking a House in the City, a hard thing to find; - My son Foster (Swift)* was married 29 Oct. to a niece of Willys (Jonathan Williams Swift)* wife (Isabella Swift)* - Miss Adela (Alida) Fitzhugh* - an acceptable event to both families, & he hastened back to his Practice & they live for the Winter with my Son James (Swift)* at 54 in West 26th St. - Mr. (Peter) Richards* finding his House getting among Hotels & Boarding Houses in Brooklyn has sold out also & got a good price, & is also seeking a House in the City - I say wait for more settled times - we expect him here in a day or two - My own health is pretty good may full equal to what one in his 80th has reason to expect - William writes me Genl. (Winfield) Scott* at 5th Av. Hotel is nicely in good quarters & Wm. thinks remarkably well. You & I are silent towards each other about how Mr. (Abraham) Lincoln* carries on the War* - I opine that our opinions are not far from each other? - & now the N. York Demos have "taken on them the responsibility" a supererogatory act & they may wish they had not? -

Have your read "Blind Tom" in the last Atlantic - if not - read it - its a marvel! I have seen two persons who heard his beautiful music whence came this function of handling the Keys?

Sally (Swift)*, Belle (Isabella) & Willy unite with me in strong Regard Your friend J. G. SWIFT

*You may remember you were to write me your thoughts last winter?

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Geneva 22 Decr. '62 (1862)

Dear friend,

Your lines of Thanksgiving day to 8th instant surprise me with another fall 'tho not so grievous as the former & yet being downstairs & upon concrete it is wonderful how you escaped alive, in all you see the Providence of God; as soon as you are able please write to me in the City how you are, under cover to my Brother William, (H. Swift)* Clarendon Hotel. - a House furnished being offered we have concluded to move down early next month, Mr. (Peter) Richards* affairs, tho as snug as any can be in such times as these, 'make it better for him to be there tho we be very comfortable here as to all that can make life bearable while ones country is in misery --

I may not close these brief lines & omit to say to you that the sentiments you express & feel in reference to me are most grateful 'tho I attribute all your success in life, under God, to your own clear head & Sound Heart.

As soon as we get to the City I shall write to you, & shall with zeal attend to the photographs that you would accept from the Swifts - & pray my friend Remember my earnest wish for a Photograph of your portrait that is with the widow (Amelia Shattuck*) of your friend Dr. (George C.) Shattuck*, & also remember that none, beside your own immediate family, could value that Portrait higher than my children. -- I am so much disturbed by the conduct of affairs that I cannot trust my self to let my pen run upon them, & I am surprised at the share of as fair health as one in his 80th on 31st inst. could expect to have, is favoured with ---

Willy (Jonathan William Swift)* & Belle (Isabella Swift)* join Sally (Swift)*, Mr. Richards & myself in every good wish for you -- We have good reports of Jo(seph) G. (Swift)* at West Point As ever Your

J. G. SWIFT

Mr. Richards is home preparing to move, & says my Brother William hears you are much improved & have been to Boston - this is very good news.

I am sorry that you have such trouble with your leg & am fearful it may keep you near home all summer? But I see no occasion why you do not - if not in pain - respond to my letter about your photograph from the Portrait at Mrs. Shattucks.

JGS.

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

No. 7 West Washington Place
City of New York 14 Jany. '63 (1863)

Dear friend,

agreeably to my rejoinder to your letter of Thanksgiving Day to 8th Decr. this comes to say where we are for the Winter, - My Br. Wm. (H. Swift*) says Tho. (J.) Leslie* says you are getting well over your fall down Cellar, - I shall be better satisfied to have that said over your sign manual - Genl. (Winfield) Scott* is improving from a very severe attack of (Stranquary) He came to see me Yesterday in my confinement with a gouty toe - & also came Genl. (Robert) Anderson in very miserable health - I fear he may not recover - He had just recd. a Telegram from Gen. Rosecrantz (William S. Rosecrans*) about Gen. A. two Brothers doing well - both wounded in the Battle of Murfreesborough in Tennessee - . Gen. Anderson is much depressed by the apathy of the north - His Brother Charles (Anderson*) just returned from England, where he went to disabuse the Public Mind of its error in viewing our Northern Purpose - prominent Men calling on him & saying our "Union had grown so fast in power that it was an absolute necessity to (dismember) it," - the actual prevalence of this sentiment in England - sent him home! O the folly of England instead of encouraging the North, to turn a cold Shoulder & permit Jealousy to cause them to aid the Rebellion. - My Brothers & my views of this Rebellion are not coincident, - mine are based on the Leprosy of Slave franchise in our otherwise great Constitution, & how we are ever to have Peace & Slavery combined I am not able to see! - My Children here unite with me in every good wish for you as ever Your

J. G. SWIFT

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

No. 7 W. Washgn. Place 9 March '63 (1863)

Dear friend,

I have yours of 1st & you are correct in estimating Williams (William H. Swift*) Loyalty. - I had perused Historians & seen his views to be found - (ably) so Mr. (Charles J.?) Petersons* 1, & 2, I had also perused he is a gentleman of very clear Military. views.

When Gen. (George B.) McClellan* was on his march - 'tho I should not have essayed Richmond as he did - it was extreme folly to interfere with him. -

of Your conditional ideas of a Great Southern Republic it cannot be built on Slavery, & no Govt. can endure there at the South, without Commerce & Arts, - the essential elements of any civilized Govt. Nor can three Govts. be established at the North, for the interests of the Great Central Basin demands a Ship Building & Sailor making Market, - More Beef & Pork & Flour are spoiled annually between Memphis & New Orleans than would, in Value, pay for the transportation of the Western surplussage to an Eastern Market!

Moreover the West will never agree to any restrictions of the Mississippi, & moreover the North & the West will not by Subdivision consent to dictation from France & England; - to be sure our great error has been valuing money more than Legal Freedom, & if we cant be cured of that in a national degree, no form of Govt can stand short of despotism - It is true men value property as the highest good, - suffering must ameliorate that error, - But its true no man should vote on Property who has none One of our great Wants is the affections & interests of Home, a generation or two obliterates that Great Power, & a species of (Primogeniture) is in my opinion sound Republicanism.

You say justly the Constitution as it is cant be restored i.e. Slave Suffrage & Rend_tion - but that Instrument is all we have & we must hold on it 'til the Constn. be amended, & that must be done before Peace for after Peace it cant be done, We want more Executive Power & a defined tenure of office - Our People in 1787 saw the imperative need of strength, & can again be caused to see that while the War endures, & Congress has seen & acted thereon, - The President for one term only & to retire on 25 000 a year for rest of his life, - Treason is imperfectly defined & so also the Right of Habeas Corpus & Territorial Rights also. - Gentlemen of Character & ability Should now correspond & thus the People gradually advised of amendments etc -

We all here unite in every good feeling to & for you
Your friend

J. G. SWIFT

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

7 West Washgn. Place 19. March 1863

Dear friend

Yesterday, while Wm. (H. Swift*) was in my room, came yours of 16th. advising of your going to Cleaveland next Week - we both said go not alone on any account - & Wm. says write the Col. I do not believe there is a Traitor in the East save Politicians & he knows I am not a Politician. -

I have no disinclination to compare thoughts with You on the War but the reverse as you may see as soon as we meet, Do come back from Cleaveland through N. Jersey & come to me here Your friend
Col. S. Thayer U.S. Engineers
So. Braintree Masstts.

J. G. SWIFT

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Geneva 13th June '63 (1863)

Dear friend,

I had expected to hear from you after your return from the West, - I hope your jaunt was Comfortable & successful - Brother William (H. Swift*) returned last of May from his annual visit to Illinois & improved in health.

Either before your going West or after returning you received my brief acknowledgement of your last letter having in it an impression of my evading argument with you on Gen. (George B.) McClellans* Campaigns, - I had & have no such purpose, - the sum of my reading is that the original movement from Washington to the Peninsula was an error - that not following up a retreating Enemy after the conflict near Williamsburgh & at it, was another, & that the Delays after the Battle of Antietam was another, - whether of Gen. McClellans originating I have never seen proof; - the two Pamphlets of Mr. (Charles J.?) Peterson* are remarkably full of facts that had not come to my knowledge before - But assailing Batteries because an Enemy had planted them - If they could be turned - is not my idea of a Military way of doing things; - I saw Gen. Mc.C. in New York but we talked only of older days - I am under an impression that the Govt. at Washington had some reason for removing him? The Adjutant General (Edward D. Townsend)* sends me the Army orders among them the order to "Retire" you & (Stephen H.) Long* & that I suppose disposes of any useful question of Rank? Col. (Hartman) Bache* called on me in New York & told me of the question of Rank between Col. (Richard) Delafield* & him_____ settled in favour of Bache. - Lt. Col. (John N.) Macomb* called on me here recently, he was of escort of the Remains of Col. E. (dmund) Kirby* to Brownville - the son of our former friend the Major (Edmund Kirby*) & Grandson of Genl. (Jacob) Brown*; - Macomb says the Corps matters go on very pleasantly & he is to build a Fort.

Our family left the City last of May & here we are as usual; - William putting his new House in W. 16th Street in order to go in next Fall. he goes to Sharon Springs soon.

Mr. (Peter) Richards* has just left us to see his Sick Father in Washington Cont. an aged Gentleman of 84 years & reported to be very ill. -

My great desire is that our Constitution may "suit the exigencies of our Country" when the War is over - War usually creates ambitious purposes & our People are not as good as they were at the Peace of 1783 - If our Constitution is to be made stronger it must be done before disbanding the Army?

Sally (Swift)* and I are here only with two little Richards; - Willy (Jonathan Williams Swift)* & Belle (Isabella Swift)* away, & we two unite in every good wish & hope for you ever

J. G. SWIFT

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Geneva 21. Sept. '63 (1863)

Dear friend,

What is the cause of my not getting a word of or from you since last May - if sick you could have sent me word by another, - Brother Wm. (H. Swift)* writes me 17th inst. that he has not heard of you for many months - he has had a successful surgical operation on the inside of his eye lid that had troubled him a good while. -

This morning we have a conflicting account of Rosecrantz (William S. Rosecrans*) being repulsed - I doubt his moving out of Chattanooga to meet a very superior force in numbers or to fight the enemy on ground chosen by that enemy. - I read that the Report of Genl (George B.) McClellan* occupies three cubic feet of documents to prove his having fought when & where as he should have done -

I suppose we shall have the substance of the cube before Congress assembles - This family is well save myself & I am something better than I was last May Your friend

J. G. SWIFT

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

No. 70 West 11th Street
City of New York Feb. 22d. '64 (1864)

Dear Colonel,

So long a time since the least item has reached me from you that I for a third time ask of you some account of yourself - judging from my own diminished strength am fearful you are not much better, & so request any friend near you to drop me a line saying how you are, if you are not able to write, - on my arrival here in Nov. I found that (Thomas J.) Leslie* nor my brother knew anything of you & have intended all along since to write you - I was last week at Genl. (Winfield) Scotts* when he enquired of the time I had heard from you, I was actually ashamed to tell him; -'tho much to say shall defer until I hear from you, & with the friendly salutes of the Swifts & Richards am as ever
faithfully Your
J. G. SWIFT

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FROM Joseph G. Swift*

No. 70 West Eleventh St.
City New York 10th March '64 (1864)

Dear friend,

(Thomas J.) Leslie* called Yesterday to tell me the first item of you since last Spring, You know that every one of my family feel an interest in You, - The letter you wrote me in Decr. to 7 West Washng. Place has gone to the Dead Letter office in Washington I have just written thither for it, - five of us unite in Regards to you J. G. SWIFT
To Colonel S. Thayer

*See Index

FROM (Edward Everett?)* to Edwin M. Stanton*

Boston 2d April 1864

My Dear Sir,

Some friends of Col. Sylvanus Thayer, entirely without his knowledge, are desirous of calling your attention to the propriety of some official manifestation of the respect, in which, they doubt not, his character and services are held by the government. He is now far advanced in years, but has not only grown old without any such manifestation, - but the manner in which he was recently retired might lead him to what I am sure is the reverse of the truth, I mean the apprehension that his distinguished services and universally acknowledged merits are forgotten. I have myself had the honor of Col. Thayer's acquaintance for 38 years; as a member of Congress and governor of Massachusetts, he being engaged in constructing the defences of Boston harbor, I had much official intercourse with him, and in common I believe with all who have ever known him, I have ever considered him as a model of a gentleman, an officers, and a public servant, - a man without a superior in his profession.

That he made West Point what it is, all admit; and the ablest of his successors have been satisfied to keep it up to his standard. - which several of them have been unable to do.

Col. Thayer's friends, in desiring to procure for him some honorary notice from the government, are not influenced by the trifling pecuniary benefit, which it may bring with it. He is happily at ease in his circumstances; - but it is not pleasant at a time when the number of military men, highly commissioned, is so great, that an officer, who, had he been twenty five years younger, would have filled, & filled honorably the highest commands, should pass out of life with no higher title than Colonel.

I remain, My Dear Sir, with great respect, very truly
Yours

*See Index

FROM Edward Everett* to Henry Wilson*

Boston 22 April 1864

My dear Sir,

The friends of Col. Sylvanus Thayer are desirous of having the compliment of brevet promotion paid him. The Secretary of War (Edwin M. Stanton*) favors it, & if we are correctly informed, his name is included on a list now before the Senate. It is, however, said that the list is so long that the Senate hesitate to confirm it in toto while it would be very difficult to take up any one name & treat it exceptionally.

I suppose, however, Col. Thayer's case is one, which the friends of all the other candidates would cheerfully admit to be exceptional. He is a Patriarch in the Service; he has no competitors or rivals; he is (I fear) near the end of his career; and is in no want of the little increase of pay. His friends ask it, as a well deserved compliment to a man of the most sterling character, who, if he were 25 years younger, would unquestionably command an army Corps, with the rank of Major General, - and do it with credit to himself & benefit to the Country.

I wish, my dear General, you would take up this little matter, "& put it through." Very truly yours,

EDWARD EVERETT

P.S. Some letters which were written from this quarter, recommending this step, are in Genl. (George W.) Cullum's* hands. I have ventured to request him to show them to you.

Since this was written, I have seen the account of Col. (Joseph G.) Totten's* promotion, at the last hour of his life. No doubt the same respect would be paid to Col. Thayer, if it were telegraphed to Washington, that he could not live through the day. But would it not be better, to let him have a few months, - possibly few years, - enjoyment of the well-earned, lately bestowed honor?

*See Index

FROM Joseph G. Swift*

Geneva 27 April '64 (1864)

Dear friend,

The demise of Genl. (Joseph G.) Totten* should not occur without some thoughts between us, - He was in the City recently but did not call on me - he passed the evening with a mutual friend - apparently well & hastened back next day to his laborious Office, - He knew no human being more intimately than me he named a Son (Joseph Swift Totten)* for me & made his signature after my fashion & o'the thousand scenes between us from the 12th year of his age until a few years ago - gone - & of that dear family of Wife, (Catlyna Totten)* daughters & Sons only Catlyna (Totten)* & Grace (Totten)* & the Widowed Julia of George remain - & the GrandSon - Susans - (Totten)* Totten was a faithful servant to his Country & worked himself to death under an idea of a Responsibility that in fact belonged to others!

I hope you have got well enough to be about - My family got Home here last Week & we Send our love to you Ever your

J. G. SWIFT

P. S. I was not well enough to go up to Mr. (William B.) Cozzens* Funeral Genl. (Winfield) Scott* & myself mourned in his memory.

2d P. S. The Chief of the Dead Letter Office in Washington writes me twice that he cant find your letter to me of last Decr.

*See Index

FROM George Ticknor* to George W. Cullum*

Boston
29 May 1864

To General Cullum, Washington D. C.

Dear Sir,

I could not, until today, answer the question about Genl. Thayer's age which you asked me in your kind letter of the 22d inst. But, at last, I have obtained the needed information from his sister. (Livia D. Thayer Wild)* He was born on the 9th of June 1785 and lacks, therefore, only a few days of being 79 years old. I think, he will live to reach that age. His physician and his sister, however, are doubtful.

Allow me to add a few words. I knew him first in the summers of 1803 & 1804, when I was 12 & 13 years old, but already a member of Dartmouth College, though not yet resident. In 1805, I went there as a regular resident and during the two remaining years of our college course, Thayer & I were much together, coming from the same neighborhood and having other affinities as classmates. I early noticed that his tastes were military. He was the only person in college who took the Intelligencer, and he took it because it contained the amplest accounts he could get of the movements of Bonaparte* and his armies; - all of which and especially those of the earlier campaigns in Metz he seemed to know by heart. In the spring of 1807, I think, he received his warrant of cadet at West Point, but was not required at once to reside there. In August of that year, we were graduated, & Thayer took the highest honors. But he cared nothing for them. He had always been very modest & shy, and would, I think, with difficulty, have been brought to face a commencement audience, consisting, in a large degree, of ladies. At any rate, some weeks before the time, he disappeared and began at W. Point his proper military studies and career. - From this time, he has been a soldier, - more exclusively devoted to his duties as a soldier in the very highest sense of that word, than I ever knew any man to be devoted to his especial profession, whether as lawyer, clergyman or anything else. What he has done as such, you know a great deal better than I do.

One or two traits, however, of a character with which I have so long been familiar I will venture to mention. They are, - an unhesitating obedience to his superiors in place, including a cheerful yielding of his own opinion on subjects where his knowledge could be fairly challenged - and - his remarkable indifference to general public and popular opinion. Provided he were obeying orders, or, if not obeying orders, provided he were doing what a very severe & exacting conscience and the most sensitive honor commanded him to do, he has always, to an extraordinary degree, seemed to care for little or nothing else. - In these, and in other respects, he has been, from the first, the same man; - good-tempered, & gentle: - clear-minded, far-seeing, -decided, - always firm and, in matters of principle, unyielding; - putting his country before everything else except his honor, -

even in a certain sense, as he never had wife or child, putting it before his family connexions. And all this, he is still. Indeed of all men, I have ever known, he has been the least changed by the progress of years in whatever goes to constitute personal character; a result, I doubt not, of the few and simple principles on which his whole life has rested. Let me add that I never heard a whisper against the absolute purity either of his conduct or motives in any relation whatever, public or private.

If it be proper in the notice of his death, which may happen at any time, to have the military order, that announces it require something to be done at West Point - a flag at half-mast, or any indication, however slight, of what he has been to that great and wise national institution - I am sure it would gratify many, and, perhaps, do good as an example, like his late promotion. But I do not know, whether military etiquette permits it. If not, please to consider, that I have said nothing about it. Very respectfully & truly yours,

GEORGE TICKNOR

*See Index

FROM George Ticknor* to George W. Cullum*

(29 May 1864)

Private

One thing I wish to put on a separate piece of paper & must ask you to destroy it, as soon as you have read it.

From Genl. Thayer's testamentary dispositions, which are well known to me, I am sure that his name will be remembered and honored by after generations - a circumstance which I mention only because its mere coloring may enter into the order concerning his death. It is, however, so nearly improper for me to mention it, that, I trust, you will never permit it to be known that I have done so.

*See Index

FROM George Ticknor* to George W Cullum*

Personal-not official

Boston, 8 June 1864

Genl. Cullum, Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you on the 29th ult. and doubt not you received my letter, which did not demand an answer. Since that time, our old friend General Thayer has continued to fail, and has had two or three sharp attacks of suffering from the organic disease in his stomach, which, no doubt, will before long prove fatal. Meantime he is bright, cheerful & perfectly natural.

Yesterday, as I sat with him, he asked me to write to you without delay and desire you to be good enough to send either to me or to him, the papers he communicated to you some years since as materials for a history of West Point. He was particularly anxious about one paper which contains the instructions, he received when he first took charge of the Academy there, and begged me to add that for the sake of his tranquillity in this closing period of his life, it is necessary that he should feel that they are coming back at once.

He has spoken to me of these papers several times before, but never, until yesterday, with this emphasis or in this tone. Otherwise I should not have delayed writing to you, until this late hour. At the same time, that he gave me this commission in charge, he desired to be faithfully and affectionately commended to you.

Tomorrow, he will be 79 years old, & I intend to go & see him, - whether for the last time, none can tell. My own impression is, that it will not be. I cannot realize that the portals of the tomb are already opening for one, who was so charming and sometimes even so gay as he was yesterday. He thinks, no doubt, that he cannot survive another attack, like the last, which occurred five days ago, and it is not unlikely, as I learn from his physician, that such may prove to be the case. But, I trust, that the resources of art or those of his remarkable constitution may sustain him for some little time longer; and that he may, at last, be spared the terrible agony he anticipates; - a full prospect of which, however, does not seem in the least to disturb his cheerful equanimity, Your friend & Servant

GEORGE TICKNOR

*See Index

FROM George Ticknor* to George W. Cullum*

Boston 5 July 1864

My dear Sir,

Your kind and considerate letter of June 23, would have been earlier answered, but that it arrived while I was absent on a journey & that, since my return, I have been too unwell, until yesterday to make our friend Genl. Thayer a visit, without which I did not like to write to you. But yesterday, I saw him. Nothing, I am instructed by his physician, can be more precarious than his situation, & he himself suffers that he could not survive another attack like the one he suffered a month ago. Still he is clearly in a much better condition than he was. He is able to digest liquids & some fruits; - he can move about the house, though with difficulty; & his mind is as bright and clear & his conversation as cheerful & charming as it ever was. His emaciation, however, is frightful & his strength very low. So, he waits as, in truth, we all do, when we get to be old, & can do nothing else.

Your enclosure was most gratifying to me, - but, of course, at present can be permitted to gratify nobody else. I return it, knowing that it may be wanted at a moment's notice, though I could not feel yesterday that it would be immediately called for. Indeed, I have rarely parted from him, when I thought the end was near - so bright and natural is he always. But his sister (Livia D. Thayer Wild)* and nurse think differently.

As to the papers, General Thayer thinks you must have them still. When he asked you for them, he says you replied that they were in your trunk at Charleston, & he has known nothing of them since. He does not, however, seem to feel anxious about them, and is gratified with your suggestion that they are safe & that a copy of the principal one can be furnished by the War Department. Whenever it is convenient, he will be glad to have them sent to me.

As you desired, I have made two or three suggestions in pencil on your excellent & interesting MS which I enclose. Only one is of the least consequence. Thayer went (out) in the frigate that took General (William) Eustis,* our Minister to Holland & did not land in England. You speak as if your notice might be deemed short, I think not. It is admirably comprehensive and entirely true, which such documents often are not. You must permit me to thank you for it. Yrs. very truly,

GEO: TICKNOR

General Cullum
Head Quarters of the Army
Washington

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

23 Jan 1865

My Dear General,

Your favors of Jan. 18th & 19th with their enclosures are thankfully acknowledged. My first words in reply are those of sincere congratulation on your promotion to be Major General by brevet in the Regular Army. Few of the similar honors recently conferred were as richly merited. I have not yet seen Senator (Henry) Wilson's* Bill No. 364 but shall ask him to send me a copy. If I find his standard of admission as high, or higher than the one I recommended I might agree that it should not be changed "except by law." My standard is much too low. If a higher one is not obtainable at present it should be raised gradually pari passu with the improvement of the common schools of the country and in the discession of the President rather than of Congress. On the whole, as at present advised, I am inclined to the opinion that it would be better to let the provision to stand as Senator Wilson has fixed it only striking out the following words "on the recommendation of the "Board of Visitors and the Academic Board" I don't see why the Academic Board should have any voice in the matter while the recommendations of the former would not have the weight of a feather with anyone who knows how that Board is composed.

I have looked over carefully the proof sheets to page 137. Grad no. 540. Seeing nothing to be corrected or improved. As I read the history of each he comes up me looking as lifelike as he did in his cadet's uniform.

Every truly yours
Genl. Cullum

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

29 Jan. 1865

My Dear General,

I have looked over all the proof sheets to page 277. No. 629. some of the histories are not complete, dates wanting etc. but I deem it unnecessary to point them out. The note to 558 is the same as that to 91. Why not refer to the latter & thus save the necessity of repeating it? There are thirty six graduates up to 628 whose fathers were worthy officers' of the Army viz Nos. 11, 12, 22, 27, 53, 60, 75, 206, 214, 231, 240, 242, 255, 258, 348, 372, 384, 217, 388, 395, 399, 410, 469, 502, 524, 526, 535, 542, 557, 558, 587, 595, 608, 609, 611, 623, 628, and three others who were grandsons of military heroes viz Nos. 177, 490, & 510.

Further reflection only increases my regret that you advised Senator (Henry) Wilson* to strike out the 4th Sect. of his Mil. Academy Bill. Equally with you, I would deprecate the agitation of the subject by a Board of Visitors. Still more would I deprecate its agitation by Congress who would be more likely to lower the standard than to raise it. I am therefore in favor of retaining the Section, only striking out all after the word "President" leaving him untrammelled and free to act in the premises on his own unbiased Judgment. This does not seem to me, however, a very important matter. I would be glad to have the Bill passed with, or without the 4th Section, provided the other Sections are all right. I am not without some fear lest your dissatisfaction with the Bill as reported may tend to defeat it.

In my Semi-Weekly Time's there is a most excellent article headed "The public service -" Competitive "Examinations" referring to Mr. (Thomas A.) Jenke's* Bill. One, or two paragraphs or phrases I could not endorse, for instance, "Placing the standard low so as to exclude none from want of means to acquire accomplishments." such as dancing perhaps. "Low" is a relative term. If the writer means a standard less high, even considerably below that at the Polytechnic School, or below that at St. Cyr Neu Markt, Woolwich but at least as high as the one proposed by the Board of Visitors in 1864 which was in fact identical with the one I had previously proposed I might agree with him. I could not, however, endorse the sublime standard recommended by Genl (Robert C.) Schenk's (Schenck)* Board which includes "Descriptive Geometry" although excluding common Geometry and Algebra. Who put that idea into their heads, I wonder.

Send me a line when about to start for Washington. Ever
yours,
Bv. Major Genl. Cullum

S. THAYER

* See Index

FROM Joseph G. Swift*

(February 22, 1865)
Washington Birthday - '65

Dear General Thayer, Your letter of 18th did not exactly surprise me, tho it awakened many impulses, for I had learned from Miss (Emma) Leslie* & Mr. (George) Ticknor* of your surprising gain in weight Health & strength, & from your own certificate of your being as well as you was 25 years ago! -- well that is good; Sally (Swift)* & Mr. (Peter) Richards* were present at the coming of your letter & joined in my enjoyment & so did William (H. Swift)* & his wife (Hannah H. Swift)* & Genl. (Winfield) Scott* soon after & Genl. (Robert) Anderson* also who came in to tell me of a letter from that General (William T.) Sherman*, & of the Re display of The Flag on Fort Sumpter - Ruins, -

Mr. Ticknor, your assured friend, had written to me recently of your being with him on your way to the Funeral of Capt. Luther Leonard* - don't I remember him & his fine open countenance - I wish I could forget the injuries heaped on him & that (Alexander) Macomb* had an agency in it! I am pleased to know that L.L. Children are well conditioned - the last time I saw him was in Geneva at my house. He was much depressed - soon after I heard of his going to Watertown - if I remember right a transfer from Missouri; You will be glad to know that Mrs. Temple (Catlyna Totten)* & Mrs. Stevens (Grace Totten)* have enough left them by their Father to live genteely, - Julia, Georges widow - is at Morristown N. J. her two sons doing well Susans (Totten)* son Capt. Telford has distinguished himself the account of which was Genl. (Joseph G.) Totten's* theme in his last letter to me. Sally purposes to send your letter to Jo.(seph) G. S.(wift)* his falling off, as noticed by you, has been a sorrow to me, but (William H. C.) Bartlett* thinks he will mend -- if anything can your grave notice will spur him to exertion - he is able but too popular. Your good wishes on the opening of my 82nd are very acceptable - the family union 31 Decr. was very pleasant & honoured by Genl. Scott & Genl. Andersons presence & some suitable remarks from both, not formal, but cheerful.

Genl. Anderson & myself are cogitating a photographic tableau of the kind you mention, -- Sally & Mr. Richards desire their Respects & you will accept my reciprocals also -- I have accounts from No. Carolina of three of the late Mrs. (Louisa) Swifts* nephews two killed & one a Prisoner. Rebels all... Ever,

J. G. SWIFT.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree March 20 '65 (1865)

My dear Genl Cullum

Your favor of the 12th came to hand on the 17th. The condition of the Academy at the time you took charge of it, although bad enough as you describe it, was not quite so bad as I had been led to fear from the representations I had recd. from others. I learned from Prof. (Dennis H.) Mahan* some three months ago and also from my charming friend Emma Leslie* (who seems to know what is going on at West Point quite as well as if she were a member of your staff) that you had been hard at work in the right direction and had already accomplished much. You saw clearly, what was necessary to be done and went to work with that resolution, determination, fearlessness, and untiring industry which will be sure in the end to remove all obstacles you may have to encounter. The obstructions in your path may not be slight and your labors may be herculean also. Yet how they dwindle when compared with mine at the outset of my administration. My mission and task were unlike yours; mine were to create, to construct to build up from the foundation under difficulties coming more from within than from without; and then to preserve and defend what had been accomplished against the assiduous or open attacks of its enemies among whom was sometimes the government itself; or against the visionary schemes of its professed friends, the latter more dangerous and infinitely more difficult to be resisted than the former; both were, however, successfully resisted up to the time I left. How it has been since you know. Your mission is to repair, to restore & then to complete the edifice that I left unfinished, or to change the figure. That respectable old lady, our dear Alma Mater under your care is sick abed, you as her doctor will administer the proper physic to set her on her feet again, to restore her to pristine health. That done you will dress her up and adorn her so that she will reappear more beautiful and her sons be more proud of her than ever before. And for doing which you will receive in reward the gratitude of her sons and all her admirers. Amen! I am glad to know that the new edition of your Register is in hand and will come out in due time. I agree with you that it should, if practicable, be compressed in a single Octavo volume and it, probably, may if the paper be as thin & strong, as that of some of my French books, but I would not recommend you to clip it for that purpose, serving it as Procrustes is said to have served his long prisoners. Some of my Octavo's (French binding) containing from 1200 to 1400 pages are not inconveniently bulky. When this work is off of your hands you must take hold of that other work the history of the Military Academy and in the meantime be collecting materials for it. I shall not live to see it but I wish to die in the belief that you will write it. To say that Boyntons History or any thing yet published is a history of the Academy is simply ridiculous. The history up to 1817 will be of little interest except to a few of the graduates, still it should not be permitted to pass into complete oblivion. Those who could now supply the necessary materials from this history of that period will soon be out of reach. As to history from

1817 onward, I propose to say nothing unless in answer to enquiries about doubtful facts. I shall procure forthwith, if possible, the August number of the U.S. Service Magazine containing your Review of Hallecks translation of Jomini's Life of Napoleon. I am a subscriber to the N. Y. Semi Weekly Times but as frequently I only glance at it the article referred to from your pen escaped my notice. Tell me, if you can, the date of the paper so that I may hunt it up. The Article will have a double interest to me as the productions of your mind & pen.

The idea of being once more in body at West Point where I spent the best twenty years of my life, where I should again meet face to face many of my old associates and dear friends, and especially of being there as a member of the Board of Visitors in which capacity I might, perhaps, render some little service to our Alma Mater is indeed one of the most enchanting I could picture to myself; but alas! The enjoyment, except in imagination, is not within my grasp. My health is now pretty good, but to keep it so requires a peculiar diet and certain appliances such as I would be unable to find away from home. The least mental labor or excitement, moreover, would break me down and, probably, finish me. For this deprivation I am consoled and feel compensated in a great measure by your promise to visit me next summer. Come as soon as possible after the Examination is over, and so plan that you can stay with me many days. We shall have much talking to do, more than we can get through with in a couple of weeks dividing the time between the War and the Academy exclusive of all other topics. Only every fair day we will take an afternoon ride. Faithfully & affectionately, Your old friend S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree August 11, 1865

My dear Genl Cullum

Sincere thanks for the copy of your admirable order No. 109. and also for the proof sheets. Continue to send the proofs as they come from the press. Possibly, I might happen to remark some small error that had escaped your notice as in the following instance viz. Under No. 1, Genl. Swift, instead of the phrase as you have it, read "In command of the Corps of Engr. July 31, 1812 to Nov. 12, 1818, ex officio' Superdt etc and in charge of the Engineer Bureau at Washington and inspector of the Military Academy April 7th to Nov. 12, 1818."

Genl. Swift was Engineer of the New Orleans and Lake Pontchartrain R.R. but not of the Baltimore-Susquehanna or of the Harlem R.R. as far as I ever knew, or heard and I would have had knowledge of it, I think, had he been so as I was in continuous correspondence with him up to within a few days of his death. I was never more surprised than I was to see the following "Aided in Suppressing Canada Border Disturbances 1839 & was appointed by the President in 1841 on a mission" etc but I do not question the truth of the statements for which you have, doubtless, good authority. "Military Agent at Fort Johnston N. C. "Feby 18 to March 28th 1812" Were I in Swifts place I would ask to have the words last quoted stricken out as adding nothing to the importance or dignity to a Major of Engr. superintending or directing the fortifications of the Carolina-Georgia Harbors.

Col. Swift continued, probably, to act as aide to Genl Pin(c)kney until he came north in Winter or early in the Spring of 1813. I would say "Aid de Campe etc 1812" instead of 1813.

Your questions in reference to No. 2 4 & 5 I am unable to answer. It might be supposed that Swift could, if alive, but he could not give me the desired information when I questioned him in 1855.

I am very sorry indeed that you could not visit me on your return from the White Mountains but it is a debt you are bound to pay at your earliest convenience. Very respectfully &
truly yrs
S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree Aug 16th '65 (1865)

My dear Genl Cullum,

Yours of the 12th enclosed with pages 4, 6 & 7 of the Register is received. Page 5 missing. You would wish me, I think, to bring to your notice for reconsideration, any errors, or whatever may seem to me to be such, however trivial they may be, and also to submit suggestions for any change whether by addition or elimination and I shall therefore continue so to do unless you intimate that I need not. Under No. 10 Joseph G. Totten I read "was graduated." This is well, I suppose because your Register purports to give a List of graduates & those only, yet there were, in fact, no graduates, properly speaking, only promotions up to a certain period which you know, but let this pass as being of no importance.

Again, I read "Served as Assistant Engineer in the construction of the defenses New York, New Haven Ct. New London Ct. and Annapolis Md. 1805-6" This was stated, no doubt, on what you deemed good authority, nevertheless, it is not correct, at least as to the date and I think it is incorrect in toto except that he served as one of the Assistant Engineers at New York from 1808 or 1809 to August 1812 when we went together to Albany & there separated, he to join the Army on the Western Frontier and I to join the Northern Army Headquarters then at Burlington. Without further proof than I now have I shall continue to believe that Totten never performed a single days military or professional duty during the nine months he held his first commission he being all that time (if I was not misinformed) with his uncle at Cincinnati, acting as his private Secretary. However that may be it is positively certain that he was not on duty either at New Haven, or New London during the period in question, and I am almost equally certain he was not at Annapolis under Col. Williams instructions early in the Spring of 1808 I made a Survey of New Haven harbor & a plan for an enclosed Battery to be built on the scite of the existing work called Fort Hale which was commenced in 1809 but whether on my plan I know not. From New Haven I went to New London made an Inspection of Fort Trumbal & an estimate of cost of the needed repairs. Then to Stonington, made a Survey of the Harbor & plans & estimates for a Gun House & Battery on Stonington Point & having finished my Report to Col. Williams repaired to Boston & reported myself to Major Swift as his only Assistant. No officer of the Corps had preceded me in Connecticut. Secretary Dearborn in his Report under date Jany 1809 says "Want of Engineers has prevented any more being done in this State (Connecticut) than merely to select the proper sites for the defenses of New Haven & Stonington and the examination of the state of the Works at

Fort Trumbull, this evidently alluding to my Report. Whether Totten had anything to do with the construction of Fort Hale or the repair of Fort Trumbull in 1809 & 1810 I am unable to say but am inclined to think he had not, although Col. Williams may have sent him there to inspect the works, or on temporary duty unbeknown by me. His permanent station was at New York where he had the immediate charge of the construction of West Head Battery - since then usually called Castle, Garden Battery. I have something more to say in reference to graduate No. 10 but must defer it for want of time today. Most respectfully & truly yours,

S. THAYER

Genl. Geo. W. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree Aug 18 '65 (1865)

My dear Genl Cullum,

In mine of the 16th it was stated that page 5 of the proof was not recd. I had mislaid it. It is now before me.

Resuming my criticisms. Under 7 & 22 would it not be well to remark that these brothers were the sons of Ethan Allen of revolutionary fame? and in every case to name the parent if an officer of the Army or Navy, living or dead, in, or out of service or even if filling or had filled a high civil position as for instance Henry Clay, Crittendon, etc.?

No. 8. It would be impossible for me or for anyone, I think to do full justice to the merits of Bomford & to the services he rendered as an ordnance officer. When war was declared in 1812 there were a few old officers of Artillery who understood the manufacture of ammunition for cannon etc. Moses Porter at the head of them but Bomford was the only Army officer who knew any thing of the manufacture of ordnance or who was a perfect master of pyrotechnia. At Pottersfield situated about three miles north of the Battery at or very near the site of Union Square, he had established workshops in which gun carriages were constructed, small arms repaired, ammunition of all kinds prepared, rockets, made etc. I acted as his Assistant in this Establishment from Nov. 1811 to May 1812 & to him I owed my commission as Captain of Ordnance, the highest on the List save one and the fourth officer of Ordnance in rank, Wadsworth, Bomford & Talcott only standing above me. Bomford however soon afterwards did me a great wrong depriving me of promotion by holding on to his commission in the Corps of Engineers contrary to an agreement between Swift & Wadsworth that no officer should continue, after April 1813, to hold commissions in both Corps. Had Bomford complied I would have been Major of Ordnance, or Captain of Engineers from April instead of Sept 1813. Pardon this digression. But for Bomford the services would have been illy supplied with material for carrying on the War. He was one among a very few to whom the Country is most indebted. He was remarkable for mechanical ingenuity and inventive power. As husband and father, in kindness, benevolence and purity of heart, no man I have ever known excelled him. (His age at death must have been greater than you make it. When appointed a Cadet he was keeping a store near Garrison opposite West Point and was then reputed to be twenty four making him at death 68. He was not younger, I am quite sure.

No. 9 I have only to suggest as a prefix the words repulse of the, before "assault of Ft Erie U. C. Augt. 15th 1814" It is to be regretted that full justice can never be done to the genius & services of McRee. He was as truly "l'homme extraordinaire" as Napoleon was, minus opportunities of making it manifest to the world. He was the soul & inspiring genius of the Army and would have been its leader had the War lasted another year, so it was predicted by the best minds in that Army. This General

Brown knew & hence was jealous of him but for this he would have done more justice to McRee than he did in the extract from his Report given in your Note.

I am inclined to the opinion that Swifts name was not in the original order Nov. 16th 1816. We know that he was sometime afterwards named as a member, but, I doubt that he was ever a working member. In fact, it was not a proper position for the Chief of the Corps.

When I took up my pen I intended to finish with No. 10 Genl. Totten but must postpone it. Will you please tell me your authority for saying that Totten "served at the Mily Academy, 1811, as paymaster of the Corps of Engineers May 27 to July 31st 1812" I was in New York Harbor with him the whole that time (minus several weeks in 1812 when I was sent on duty to the site of the present Ft. Delaware) unless I have lost my senses. Ever truly yours

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree Aug 22d, 1865

My dear Genl. Cullum

I have yours of Aug. 18th (postmarked 19th) with proof pages 11, 12 & 13 containing graduate numbers from 17 to 22 both inclusive, with it also page 5 which I now have in duplicate having found the one first sent which I had mislaid as said in my last. Your Register is a book that will be read at least as long as the Academy itself shall endure, or a single future graduate shall survive. It must be your wish to make it such as that it may stand the test of the most searching scrutiny. That it should be correct in every particular even the most minute and seemingly unimportant, moreover, that there should not be in it any questionable, or doubtful fact, if it be possible to avoid it. I shall therefore continue, if you think proper, to point out whatever may seem to me deserving reconsideration, but I beg you to bear in mind, always, that whenever my opinions and suggestions (which will often be crude because given without due investigation or reflection) shall not be concurred in, or adopted, I shall take it for certain that you are right and, of course, that I was wrong. Were it otherwise, you would not believe me such a dunce as to be displeased with your acting on your own judgment in a matter wherein your own reputation is at stake, not mine. But enough & too much of this "revenons a' nous moutons"

No. 1. You ask "Would not Genl. Swift appear to have had charge of the Engr. Bureau only from April 1817 etc" Until then there was never at Washington, or elsewhere in the United States such an office as that created by Mr. Calhoun in 1818 under the name of "Engineer Bureau". The Chief Engineer to be sure had, of course, an office at his Headquarters wherever they were, but such office was of different nature and had an entirely different object from that of the "Engineer Bureau". Genl. Swift went to Washington sometime about Feby or March 1818 but had no office there that I ever heard of until the "Bureau" was established, so that the words you proposed to insert viz. "When not absent on War, or other duties" would not help the matter, as I think. You will find in a former letter all I ever learned and remember in relation to Swifts membership of the Board of Engineers. Concerning his "mission to the British Provinces and his aid in suppressing "Canada Border disturbances" now that my old friend is gone & can respond no no enquiries I propose to say nothing more. If his memory was not always reliable it was because that faculty in him was impaired in a very remarkable degree.

In no former letter did I intend to say that Totten might not have been at New London sometime in the year 1809. Only that he could not have been there or at New Haven or elsewhere in Connecticut as Assistant "Engineer" in the construction or repair of Fortifications prior to 1809 and in proof thereof I gave an extract from a Report of the Secretary of War under date Jan. 6th 1809. My opinion is that from the time he first reported himself to Col. Williams for

engineer duty to the declaration of War in 1812 he had no other permanent station than New York where he superintended the construction of "West Head Battery from foundation to completion. It was the only work of which he had charge during that time or from 1808 to the War of 1812 as far as I ever knew although, as I said in a former letter, he might have had some temporary charge in Connecticut, or elsewhere in 1809, possibly, but very improbably in 1810. Without my being informed of it. The superstructure of this work, on a foundation of (pierres perdues) previously prepared was commenced early in 1810, carried on pari passu with Castle Williams a similar work planned on the Montelembert system, was completed, at least the masonry was, late in 1811, the armament and other necessary preparations for its efficient service occupied Totten until sometime in the summer of 1812, or about the time we left together for the Canada frontiers.

Were I to give Totten's military history prior to the War of 1812-15 with the information I now have and no other it would be as follows

"Cadet at the US Mily. Academy from Nov. 1st 1802 to July 1st 1805 when he was promoted in the Army to 2d Lt. Corps of Engr. Resigned March 31st 1806 - Reappointed second Lieut. Corps of Engr. Feby. 23d 1808, - First Lieut Corps of Engr. July 23d 1810 - Captain Corps of Engineers July 31st 1812 - Served as Assistant Engineer in the construction of the defenses of New York" (New Haven and New London, also, if you have reliable authority that such was the fact) from 1808 to July 1812" Although Totten was a cadet during the time above stated I doubt whether he was at the Mily Academy in 1805 or even in 1804 & I have been under the impression that Totten was never at West Point from the time he left it as a cadet to the time he was there as President of the Court of Enquiry on Capt. Partridge in 1816, but you may have evidence that he was. Respectfully and truly yours,
Genl G. W. Cullum S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree, August 25th (1865)

My dear Genl.

I resume my rambling notes. Promotion No. 3, "At the Mily Academy 1811-12." Armistead may have been there a few days in 1811-12. All I can say is that I never saw him altho I went there from New York in the "Sloop Engineer" with Col. Williams in 1811 many times. The first time we met was after the War 1812-15. No. 8 "Served as Assistant Engineer at the fortifications of the inner harbor of New York 1805-1808, and on the defenses of Norfolk Va 1808-1811, as Superintending Engineer of the works on Governors Island New York Harbor 1808-1811." There is some inaccuracy in the above statement. I saw Bomford for the first time in Sept 1807 I then a Cadet, he a first Lieutenant. He came on shore at West Point and passed a couple of hours having with him his wife, her mother & father all on their way from the residence of the latter to New York. We were on duty together in New York & harbor from early Spring of 1811 to about Sept. 1812. Where he was at other times prior to the War of 1812-15 I formerly knew from himself, perfectly, but most of the particulars are now effaced from my memory & I can only give my impressions. I know, however that he was employed in the War office making plans & drawings (under the immediate direction of Secy. Dearborn) for sea coast defenses, but I cannot speak positively as to the time he was so employed. It is only certain he was there early in 1808 and might have been there during the whole of that year and part, or the whole of the year 1809. I have forgotten the history of the Laboratory and Arsenal at Pottersfield and Bomfords connection with it prior to 1811. It was and is my impression that he was the builder and founder of the establishment. I found it in full operation under him, he having Sargeant Mosely as his Overseer early in the Spring of 1811. There were some 15 or 20 artificers, and workmen well trained and from other evidences I should think that the work had been going on a long time, a year, or more. On the whole my impression is that Bomfords station was at New York from 1805 when he was promoted til he entered upon his duties as an officer of Ordnance at Albany 1812-13 except when in the War office Washington, but this impression will have no weight if found to conflict with reliable authorities. The statement that he was "superintending Engineer of the Works on Governors Island 1811" under the eye however of Colonel Williams may be correct, but, at present I feel quite sure that the other statement viz "served as assistant Engr on the defenses of Norfolk, Va. "1808-1811" cannot be correct at least in toto. You will think, I fear, that I have made more words than was necessary on so small a matter. Ever yours, S. THAYER
Genl. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree August 28th 1865

My dear Genl.

I write without order, or method, calamo currente, a few moments at a time when I come in for rest from outdoor labors and am too tired. Reverting to No. 17 of the Register. Wood & I lived together at West Point in the Winters of 1807-8 and 1810-11 and at New York 1813-14 occupying the same room or rooms in the same building and eating at the same table. When in the field he wrote to me frequently describing all he did, or saw his last letter to me bearing date some three or four days before he fell, was, probably, the last he ever wrote. So that I was almost as well acquainted with his history as I am with my own. At West Point before or after his promotion he read every work on military subjects then extant in the English language and no officer knew better than he how to make a practical use of the theory he had acquired. He was every inch a soldier, cast in the mould of a hero. Had he lived in the time of the Crusades he would have figured among the foremost as apreux chevalier and his moral character was without a blemish, or a defect as far as I ever knew. He kept a detailed journal of operations of Harrisons Army in the campaign of 1813 including the siege of Fort Meigs which he shewed me with a plan of the Fort representing the bomb-proof traverses he constructed for the shelter of the garrison, owing to which very few men were hit by projectiles during the siege. There is no doubt that he kept a like journal of operations on the Niagara in 1814 up to the day of his death. You have an idea of Wood's services at the siege of Ft. Meigs from Harrisons Report of August 9th at the debarkation in Canada & on the march to the Thames from "General orders of Sept. 26th at the battle of the Thames from Harrisons Report of Oct 9th 1813 - at the capture of Ft Erie and battle of the Chippewa from Genl. Browns Report of July 7th 1814 - at the battle of Niagara July 25th from Browns Report - In the defense of Ft. Erie and at the repulse of the enemies assault from Genl. Ripleys Report of August 17th and Genl. Gaines' Report of August 23d at the Sortie from Ft. Erie Sept. 17th from Browns Report of Sept. 29th, but you can get only a very imperfect idea of the part he acted and the value of his services at the battle of the Thames from Harrisons Report. He planned the battle and was in fact the commander in all but the name. At early morn after the enemy had made his dispositions for battle Wood crept along his front near enough to count his files and ascertain his force with great precision. And also to find out his weak points. This was related to me by Col. Todd one of Genl. Harrisons aids who was present. I have done with No. 17 having said more than I intended and enough to try your patience. Truly yours

S. THAYER

Genl. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree Aug 30th 1865

My dear General,

Yours of the 25th enclosed with pages 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 is received. I return page 5 as requested. You adopt my view of Tottens history "from 1808 to 1812" but why not that of prior date? Have you satisfactory authority for the statement that he served as "Assistant Engineer in the construction of the Defenses of New York, New Haven and Annapolis from 1805 to 1806" or that he was at either place on professional duty in 1807, or 1808? If you have I give it up and only ask to be informed of that authority for my own satisfaction. I acknowledge that you have good authority for stating that Totten was appointed paymaster of the Corps of Engineers but that he served as such I would not have believed aside from his own testimony because I have not the slightest recollection of the fact although we were together almost every day during the time in question and afterwards until we parted at Albany in September following. I have now finished with number 10. I think so now. A few words more touching Nos 16 & 17 & others but deferring them till my next I will then take up pages 14 - following which I have not yet looked at. Truly and respectfully S. THAYER
Genl. Cullum

P.S. Since writing the above I have glanced at Nos. 23, 30, 31, & 32. but reserve my remarks only asking your authority for locating 31 & 32 at West Point the former in 1811 & the latter in 1811-12 incorrect in toto

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TO George W. Cullum*

Sept. 1865

My dear General Cullum,

Many thanks for your history of No 33. The corrections and amendments I have to point out and suggest are few and of small importance "At the Mily Academy, 1809-10", I was there from Nov 20th 1809 to April 1811, and served as commander of the Post from the first mentioned date to (about) April 20th 1810 and as acting Assistant Professor of Mathematics during the Term of 1810 to its close in Nov. From which time to April 1811, it being Vacation, I was not assigned to any duty. You may mention these services, or, if you think best, leave the item as quoted. For myself I have no preference. I acted as Adjutant also during a part of the Term - a short time, probably, and therefore not to be mentioned at any rate. "And as Aide de Camp to Maj. Genl. Hampton 1813-14" 1814 to be eliminated. I left Hamptons Army in Decr. 1813 and was soon afterwards (Jany 14th 1814) appointed Brigade Major to Genl. Porter, then in command at New York. Went with him to Norfolk in April and there performed the double duty of Chief Engineer & Brigade Major to May 1815 as stated in your old Register.

"As superintending Engineer of the construction of Fts. Warren and Independence Boston Harbor Ms. 1833-43" I hope to be able to convince you by what I shall say, if not now, in a future communication, that the item should read "of Fort Warren 1833-1857, and of Fort Independence 1833-48. I only remark here en passant, that, by special request of Col. Totten, the general direction of those works was retained by me during my absence from the United States. Captain Bigelow and Lieut. Wright so understood and, accordingly, made to me their Annual Reports of 1844 and 1845, corresponded with me and received my instructions as to the conduct of the works under their immediate charge, respectively.

"Special Board of Engineers for Hudson River improvement, 1834" At one time or another I have been a member of a great many special Boards, a dozen at least, too many to be named individually in your Register. For instance, the Board that drew up Scotts system of Tactics composed of Scott, Fenwick, Brady, (Worth) & myself most of the work devolving on me as the translator from the French System of which it was almost a literal copy - - a Board on the Delaware Breakwater - the Board of which Commodore Stewart was President for the trial of Stevens Shell & to prove the resistance of iron plates to heavy shot & shells. - An Ordnance Board convened at Fortress Monroe. Three, or four ordnance Boards convened at Washington etc. etc. Without naming any one Board I would simply say "Member of various special Boards of Engrs, Artillery, and Ordnance and improvement of Rivers and Harbors, or other words of like import.

"In general supervision of Harbor improvements in N. H. and Ms. 1836-1839." Maine should be added for I had charge with three separate works in that State viz the Breakwater at Kennebunk also planned by me - The Breakwater at Portland and a Beacon at Belfast planned by Totten. There is an error in the dates within which I exercised the supervision in gestion but I am unable to rectify it without a search among my scattered papers. I feel confident that I was put in charge earlier and I am quite sure that I retained it some years later than you stated.

"As Superintending Engineering of construction of Sea Walls for the preservation of islands in Boston Harbor" to be stricken out, if you please some little credit may be due me for planning and constructing the walls on Lovells and the Brewster yet they are comparatively unimportant structures and, moreover, are comprehended in the "Harbor improvements" in Mass. etc for which I am credited above.

"And of the coast defenses east of Boston 1839-43" Here again is an error in dates which I shall not be able to rectify without a search among my papers - a search I will undertake if the necessary information cannot otherwise be procured. My impression is that the supervision was given me in 1833 at the same time with the charge of the works in Boston Harbor but I am not sure of it. I can only say, positively, that operations for the repair and improvement of Forts and Batteries east of Boston were going on under my general supervision prior to 1836. At Fort Constitution under Lt. Wm. Wall, following him Lieut. Francis Vinton (now D. D.) who quit in 1835 and resigned Augst. 1836 - after him under others up to Decr. 1843, that is to say, up to 1844, terminating the first period of The second period commenced on my return from Europe in July 1846. When it terminated there are, probably, no means of ascertaining with precision for the reason that no Engineer order terminating it was ever issued, to my knowledge. It was a voluntary relinquishment on my part without a word said on the subject by me to Totten or by me to him either then, or afterwards. The occasion was the discovery that an official correspondence was going on, not through me between Totten and my Assistant (Woodbury) at Fort Constitution. It was a short time before W. left. If you can find out when he left, that will fix the date in question. My assistants at Portland prior to 1844, were Lieut. G. S. Greene, Capt. John R. Vinton & others. In 1846 & subsequently - Wm. Dearborn, mostly.

"As Superintending Engineer of Repairs of Governors Island Batteries Ms 1841-43", I would wish to have stricken out.

"As Supt. Engineer of (Ft (Warren Ms. 1846-57 and of Fts. Independence and) Winthrop Ms. 1847-8;" The words enclosed by brackets I would wish to have stricken out, also, as being inconsistent with my claim to have had charge general, or immediate, of all the constructions for the defense of Boston Harbor from 1833 to 1848 save, however, any claim you may have to be regarded as Superintending Engineer, for a certain period, at Fort Warren and Governors Island - a claim I shall not question.

"On Special Board of Engineers for projecting Fort on Ship Island Mi 1857" to be stricken out as being included under the head of "Special Boards of Engr. Artillery, Ordnance" &c above stated.

"As member of the Board of Engr for Atlantick Coast defenses from April 2d 1833 to Decr 21st 1857." Shall it stand so, or shall the following be added to the same "and President of the Board from Decr 7th 1838. It is a mere suggestion. I don't insist. It should here be observed that although the Board was originally constituted for the Atlantic Coast, its sphere of action after a certain time was extended to the Gulph and Pacific Coasts.

I forgot to notice in its proper place the following: "For distinguished and meritorious services at Norfolk." The words "at Norfolk" are not found in the Commission which is now before me. My supposition is that the Brevet in question was conferred by the government as an expression of its approbation of my general conduct during the War 1812-15.

"Member of several scientific societies since 1834" I have been elected member of more societies than you could "shake a stick at" - Geological Society of Penna. &c, &c. but only two I would wish to have named viz. "member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 1834 and of the American Philosophical Society Penn. 1838" not so much for my own gratification as that of relatives who may survive me. Condensed as proposed my humble history will be much abbreviated which was a (desideratum) I have purposely omitted to mention my membership of several Boards for the improvement of Boston Harbor &c under appointment by Governors of Massachusetts with the addition of these I could make for myself if I so desired as long a tail as you have given to Col. Gates or any other of the old school of graduates. I hurry this in order that it may go by todays mail. Respectfully
& truly yours
S. THAYER
Genl. G. W. Cullum

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TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree Sept 1st '65 (1865)

My dear General,

I continue my notes.

No. 12 was the son of Doctor John F. Heileman Surgeon in the US Army from 1802 to 1816 when he died.

No. 16 "Served on Engineer duty in Mo. Ter. - 1806-8." doubtful at least. "As Assistant Engineer in the construction of the defenses of Charleston Harbor S. C. 1808-1811," not after 1809, or several of the first months of 1810. He was at West Point from the Spring or early summer in 1810 to the Spring of 1811. And perhaps later. xx "and was engaged in the Defense of Ft. Meigs April 28th to May 9th, 1813" It would naturally be inferred that being the senior engineer present he directed the "Defense" which would be doing injustice to the memory of No. 17 who alone directed the "defense" and to whom the whole credit of it is due. (See Harrisons Report August 9th) "Dismissed Dec. 6th 1838 for having failed to pay" &c If the fact here stated as the reason for his dismissal were true, and it was admitted to be so by Gratiot himself, then the punishment would seem to me, and I think it would most persons, to have been just and necessary, and proper to be had up before the eyes of all graduates as an example and a warning, but the crime was not simply a disobedience and a refusal to refund; it was something much worse viz an act called embezzlement - appropriating to his private use public funds entrusted to him. This, however, is only an inference - a fair one, I think drawn from his mode of life which was believed, generally, by those best acquainted with it, to involve an expense far exceeding the amount of his salary, or his known private income. It is charitable to suppose he would have refunded the money if he had the means of so doing. In any view I can see no reason for whitewashing him and therefore saw with regret the note appended to his history. Although the object of the Report cited was a benevolent one, that of soothing the feelings of the memorialist and his friends yet - as an exparte statement casting, by inevitable implication, a (severe) an unjust censure upon the President and Secretary of War, it seems to me, pardon me for saying it, out of place in your Register. Every truly yours

S. THAYER

General Cullum

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TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree Sept 2d 1865

My dear General,

The thought might naturally occur to you in reading my notes of yesterday that my judgment of the case was made up without a perfect knowledge of all the facts connected with it, or that it biased by some unfriendly feeling toward him while living. I now beg to assure you that neither supposition would be correct. My final judgment was based on such facts only as he admitted to be true in an interview which he sought soon after his dismissal for the purpose of explaining the case. This, you may be sure he would not have done had he entertained the idea, or suspicion that I was unfriendly to him. He knew I was not. We had in former years lived together in perfect concord and nothing had ever occurred to disturb the kind feelings we mutually entertained for each other. Few would have rejoiced more than I could I have been convinced that he was blameless, but after hearing all he had to say in his defense, I was not convinced, and candor compelled me to tell him so plainly, but kindly. We met twice afterwards, once at Washington and again at Philadelphia and from his manner at both times I judged that his feelings towards me were then as kind as they ever had been and as mine certainly were towards him. I believe then as I do still that he became involved less from his own fault than that of his wife and daughter Virginia now Madam Monthalon who wished to live in style and make a show among the families of the foreign ministers and the aristocracy of Washington. Strong was the temptation and great the pressure upon him and he was wanting in the requisite firmness to resist them thereby leaving a stain on his otherwise fair fame. The crime, whatever can be said in its palliation, or extenuation, was such that the government could neither overlook it, or in my opinion, punish it otherwise than it did.

Should you feel inclined to look into the merits of the case I could furnish you with the principal facts from memory to be compared with the facts you may derive from other sources. The Report of the Senates Committee on Gratiot's memorial is only calculated to mislead. I am
truly yours
S. THAYER
Genl. G. W. Cullum

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TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree Sept. 4th '65 (1865)

My dear General,

Several officers of Engineers are put down in the proof pages as having "served at West Point when either they were not there at the times stated, or if there were not on duty and, therefore, to say that they "served" would be incorrect. I proceed to point out these errors altho' doubtful whether they are of importance enough to require correction. Of that you are the best Judge. You know that prior to 1815-16 the annual Term of study and instruction at the Academy extended theoretically from April 1st. to Decr. 1st a period of eight months but, practically, only from about the middle or 20th of April to about the 15th or 20th of November, not exceeding on an average, seven months. This interval of five months was vacation during which Cadets and their instructors were at liberty to absent themselves; also all officers of Engineers excepting the one designated to command the Post. If another officer, or officers remained, or came there during vacation he, or they were there from choice for study, not for duty. The above remarks seemed to me proper by way of introduction.

No. 17 "Served at the Military Academy, 1808" He could not have been at West Point during any part of the 1808 Term. He passed the vacation of 1807-8 with me at West Point, but left early in the Spring of 1808 (for Norfolk, I suppose) about the time I left. He again past the vacation of 1810-11 there with me. He was not there in that of 1809-10 and not, probably in that of 1808-9 or any other than those I have mentioned.

No. 18 with No. 15 were at their respective homes at Norwich Vt. on Connecticut River opposite Hanover N.H. from the date of their promotion to the end of the 1806-7 vacation, when No. 15 returned to West Point but No. 18 did not. I think, I am only sure he was not there on duty at West Point in 1807. Where he was from that time to the vacation of 1810-11 which we passed together at West Point, I am unable to recall to memory. You say at "Charleston" correctly, no doubt. In 1812 he was at New York until he left to join the North West under Genl. Hull. He wrote to me frequently up to the time of the "surrender" and in all his letters he described Hull as an "imbecile" and predicted his inglorious fall. He was a man of superior intellect, capable of great things.

No. 19 "Served at West Point N. Y. 1806-7", He may have been and probably was at West Point during the vacation of 1806-7, but did not "serve", I think. He was there with me during the vacation of 1810-11. He could not have been on duty in New York harbor either in 1811, or in 1812. Where he was I dont remember, but think it must have been somewhere South, perhaps at Beaufort. S. C. where you located him immediately before and afterwards. He was also a man of superior intellect and would have made his mark but for his early death.

No. 31 was a classmate of mine in Dartmouth College and appointed a Cadet when Sophomore a person of mere ordinary

talents, an indifferent student there and at West Point, more fond of dress and gallantry than of books - a Buck in character as in name. His father, a respectable lawyer of Norwich had been a Representative in Congress from Vermont. He superintended the construction of the star Fort on Bedlow's Island from its commencement until relieved by me in the Spring of 1811, from which time 'till he handed in his resignation he spent his time not at West Point but in the city of New York, performing no duty. The evening of July 4th we spent together at a public garden situated between the Bowery & Broad-Way where, or near where Niblos now is or was. When he resigned he was innocent of all professional knowledge as a babe

No 32 "Served as Assistant Engineer in the construction of the fortifications of New York Harbor 1808-10" I should say 1808-14. "At West Point N. Y., 1811-12". I am of opinion that that he was never on duty at West Point and even doubt his being there on a visit either in 1811 or 1812 but you may, perhaps, have authority to prove that I am in error. If my memory has not deceived me when I left New York to join the Northern Army about Sept. 1st 1812 he was superintending the construction of the North Battery then so called but since christend Fort Ganzevort (Gansevoort)- I found him in charge of it still, although operations were suspended by the cold weather, when I came back to New York about the first of December, when I assumed command of the Pottersfield Arsenal and retained it until about the middle of June 1813 although I had some weeks earlier resigned my commission in the Ordnance. Babcock was quatered in the same building with me, sat at my table where there was plenty of wine and spirits which he partook of liberally, but never furnishing any himself although he kept bottles of Brandy and other liquors secreted in a trunk kept in his bed-room as Captain Cutbush who lived with us & who, by mere accident, had several times caught him in the act of swigging from the bottles. I mention the anecdote as better calculated than any thing else to illustrate the character of the man and to account in some measure for his subsequent confirmed intemperance which brought him to a miserable end. But to come back and conclude He was still in charge of the North Battery when I left to join General Hamptons Army in the summer of 1813. On my return in Decr I found him and Wood in New York boarding with a Mrs. Hand with whom I also boarded until I recd the appointment of Brigade Major to General Moses Porter. We left for Norfolk on the 1st April, Babcock being still at Mrs. Hands and Wood on his way to rejoin General Harrison Early the next Summer (1814) I hear of his being at Baltimore Fortunately for you I am compelled, nolens volens, to stop here. Ever yours
S. THAYER
Genl. G. W. Cullum

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TO George W. Cullum*

Sept. 12 '65 (1865)

My dear General,

An attack of Cholera Morbus 8 or 9 days ago which was followed by a diaraeha has stopped the flow of my pen 'till now but I was just ready to resume my notes when last evenings Mail brought me your favor of the 9th. upon which I proceed to make a few remarks intending that they shall be brief as possible. No 3 "ordered to report to Col. Williams at (West Point)" That fact is not and has not been questioned by me. The only question, or doubt was whether he "served at the Military Academy 1811-12" When I left (about 1st April) Wood, Willard, Wm. Partridge and Gratiot also, if I remember aright, were there awaiting orders. none on duty excepting the senior Engineer who commanded the Post, of (riaht) No 3 was not there then but came, probably, soon afterwards How long was he there? If on duty, what? or was he there only a few days awaiting orders? please consider that the commencement of 1808 to 1812 was a period of active preparation for the War that followed - a period during which the demand for officers of Engr as compared to the supply has never been greater; the number of new works going up and of old works under repair for the defense of the coast being for the as compared with the number of officers in the Corps at least as five or six to one. Please consider also that there was no Military Academy in operation at West Point (properly speaking) during the Term of 1811, or in 1812. Does it seem probable on the face of it that any officer of the Corps (Partridge expected) especially one of high rank in 1811-12 with nothing for him to do there? absolutely nothing. Nevertheless, if there be good authority to shew that Armistead, or Totten, or any other officers of the Corps was so nullified let it be recorded to his discredit. I rejoice that it was not my fate to be placed in that predicament.

No 8 Correct as far as I know. In 1811 he came from Pottersfield perhaps once a month on an average to inspect the works under my charge. Sometimes late in that year he came with his family to Fort Columbus. It appears from statement under No 10 that Bomford was on duty at Fort Washington and at Annapolis in 1808. This accounts for his having been employed in that year to make plans and drawings for the War Department as I stated in a former letter. Have you nothing to show when he came from the South to New York It must have been as early as the beginning of of 1810, I think, probably earlier.

No 10 encore "1805-6" comports with my belief as stated in a former letter-"1808" not questioned. "1809-10". Are you quite sure that you have Tottens authority for stating that his permanent station 1809-10 was not at New York. I have ever been under the impression derived, as I think, from Totten himself that he superintended the construction of West head Battery christened Fort Clinton from foundation to completion, that is to say, from the commencement of 1809 to the summer of 1812. It was an admirable work for the time reflecting high credit on his skill as Engineer in comparison with which the repair of Ft. Trumbul and the constructions of Ft. Hale and the Battery at Sag Harbor were but paltry works. That he had some thing to do with the last mentioned while in immediate charge of Ft. Clinton I am not disposed to question.

"1812" The fact must be admitted as it is confirmed by himself. strange as it may seem that I, being with him at the time, had not remembered it

No. 16 Having given you my view of Gratiots case as I felt bound to do and my reasons for thinking that his punishment should be held up in terrorem I drop the subject. I approve and honor the kind and generous feelings that induced you to append to his history the exculpatory and white washing document. I entirely concur in the favorable view you have taken of G.^s general character as an officer and of his private virtues as a man. If we differ at all it is only in what is necessary to the ends of public justice. My only object in touching the subject was to invite a reconsideration not doubting that you would come to a correct final judgment.

No. 17 & 18. see my remarks under No. 3.

No. 19 I was the only officer of Engineers acting as an Assistant to Genl. Swift on the coast of Masstts. from May 1808 to Nov 1809. Farther East Walbach was Agent of Fortifications & Superintendent at Ft. Constitution - Henry Dearborn at Portland & Eastward. I never saw or heard of Willard being any where in Swifts District. As said above I left him at West Point awaiting orders in the Spring of 1811. He was not then nor had he been previously on duty there.

No 31 Refer to the Statement in my last letter which I reaffirm in every particular.

No 32 My former Statement reaffirmed also in every particular.

No. 33 not yet even looked at but will be taken up in my next. Faithfully & truly yours
Genl. G. W. Cullum
U. S. Corps of Engrs

S. THAYER

P. S. You would confer a favor by sending me a literal transcript of that part of the "Engineer Order Book" to which you referred shewing that Totten, Babcock, Buck and others was with Armistead April 4t 1811. If indeed they were there then it must have been on a spree

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Sept. 15th '65 (1865)

My dear General,

I have looked over sheets 20 to 27 seeing scarcely any thing calling for remark. No. 34 (page 19) was a Cadet five years receiving pay as such during the whole of that time but was under instruction at West Point one Term only, that of 1807. I mention this, although an extreme case, to show that the time any one was on the rolls and recd. pay is no indication of the time he was a resident at West Point, nor was his residence there any index of the time he was under instruction, nor was his promotion any index of the amount of instruction he had received at the Academy nor any evidence that he had been under instruction at all, nor even that he had been recommended for promotion by the proper Authorities. The term "graduated" prefixed to the names of most of those promoted prior to 1817, or 1818 must seem simply ridiculous to others who knew them at the Academy. Even those promoted into the Corps of Engineers were very little indebted to the Academy. No. 1 was there only from May to October. Nos. 2 & 3 the same time - No. 8 not over 4 or 5 months - No 9 two terms he being then very young No. 10 not more, probably, than 5 or 6 months altogether Nos 15 & 18 (the brace of Partridges) less than one Term. - No 16 two & a half Terms. - No 17 less than two Terms - No 19 a little less than two Terms. - No. 31 some 3 or 4 months (at home most of the time in 1807.) No. 32 - one Term - that of 1806 - No 33 about three months. No. 53 was on the Cadet Roll six years but was a mere boy when placed upon it. The next in order No 88. French was his mother tongue - The skill in Drawing and penmanship for which he was distinguished he acquired before he came to West Point. He was there during the Term of 1807, not there in 1810, 1811 or 1812 and, I think not, after 1807. Young, giddy, fond of play and sport, he was not a diligent student and made little progress, especially in Mathematics for which he had, apparently, little natural aptitude. The remainder of his Cadetship was passed on duty at New York with Col Williams in the capacity of Secretary Draughtsman etc - No 86 (inadvertantly passed over) although on the Cadet Roll, was not at West Point after 1809 and probably not after 1808, (if there at any time) he being on duty at New York, or elsewhere, as an overseer etc. No 90 on the Roll as Cadet about 5 months in Term Time - No 99 one Term only - that of 1813. (there being no Cadet under instruction in 1812) No. 121 one Term and half of another - No. 146, one Term and half of another - 147 & 148, the same - 149 one Term - No. 150, less than one whole Term.

It cannot be truly said that any of these twenty five promoted into the Corps of Engineers prior to 1818 went through a regular Course of Studies at the Academy so as to entitle them to a Degree, or Diploma, or to be called graduates in any other than a pickwikian sense. Nevertheless, if you think best to honor us with that proud title, par complaisance, so be it.

No. 37. "Reappointed and served as Military Storekeeper" The words "reappointed, and" I would recommend to be expunged. He was not re-appointed.

"Went to Cuba in Decr. 1820 where he" to be expunged, if you think proper. He was sent away in order that he might not die at home. He was in the last stage of consumption when he was sent away. No person who saw him then could think it possible that he would live to reach his destination, and did not.

39. The father of No. 843. We used to call him Mat. Lyon whom he was thought to resemble in character. Who was Mat. Lyon? You would know if you remember the spitting scene between him and Griswold Of Connt. in the House of Representatives on the occasion of Jefferson's election. Father & son were much alike in talent and character. The lives of both were supposed to have been shortened by intemperance.

No. 41 was made of same stuff as Wood whom he closely resembled in general character but whom he did not fully equal in mental resources.

No. 43. did not, if I remember aright "serve in garrison at Atlantic posts" but went direct from West Point to that famous and fatal spot near New Orleans where he was carried off by yellow fever together with a large portion of Wilkinsons Army there encamped

No. 44. "For incapacity resulting from long and faithful service, and disease contracted in the line of his duty" might not the whole of this be suppressed? I don't like that term "incapacity" as applied to my old friend. His age, 75, would, it seems to me, be deemed a sufficient reason for retiring him.

I am exceedingly gratified by the favorable dispositions of Sec'tary (Edwin M.) Stanton* towards yourself and the Academy. With sincere regards ever
S. THAYER
General Cullum

*See Index

TO John G. Barnard*

Sept 20t '65 (1865)

My dear General,

On the 22d page of the Eulogy there are eleven lines (which I have enclosed by brackets) which on reconsideration you will, I think, conclude to leave out, or to modify. The history of the Mily Academy prior to 1817 remains to be written. The few who have undertaken to write it or portions of it have utterly failed from ignorance of the necessary facts. The last attempt, (Edward C.) Boyntons,* being the greatest failure of all. (Alden) Partridge* was father to the order referred to. He drew it up, carried it to Washington and obtained Mr. Munroe's (James Monroe)* signature by a suprise-a-coup de-main. His object was to get himself acknowledged or appointed as Superintendent, independent of Genl. (Joseph G.) Swift* and the object would have been attained had the order been carried into effect but fortunately, it was not nor or could it be for its absurdity made it a nullity.

Genl. Swift was ex officio Superintendent all the time he was Chief Engineer up to July 28th 1817 and was so recognised and addressed by the War Department as was shewn by the correspondence between the Department and the General copies of which were furnished me at the time I assumed the superintendency. In Swifts absence, (Walker K.) Armistead* being "second in rank" might have Superintendent and would have been so under the law had he been present, but Partridge could not be. Swift being the acknowledged Superintendent, to make him the Inspector of the Academy would be not less absurd than to make the Colonel of a Regiment the inspector thereof - In relation to the claim of Partridge to be Superintendent see Secretary (William) Crawfords* letter (American State papers Vol 1t page 838) in which he says to Genl Swift "from his (Partridge) signing some of his acts as Superintendent of the Academy he may have supposed" &c xx "No officer, so long as the law remains as it is, can be the Superintendent of the Institution but the principal officer of the Corps of Engineers, or the next in the command of that Corps, in case of his absence" The Genl had, frequently been requested by the Secy of War to send Partridge away from West Point but thinking as he did then that Partridge was "the right man in the right place" and that no other officer of the Corps was equal to the position and being also nettled by the attempt of the War Dept. to interfere with his proper duties and responsibilities as he understood them, he persistently declined a compliance and hence was ordered, in the Autum of 1816, to assume in person the immediate charge of the Academy which he retained, however, some three months only, then establishing his Headquarters at Brooklyn N. Y. wether with, or without the Presidents permission I never knew. From the correspondence above referred to it was manifest that throughout the year 1816, if not earlier that the dissatisfaction of the President and Secretary of War with the state of things at the Academy was extreme and ~~that they~~

leading them to a determination to make a radical change in the government of the Institution with as little delay as practicable. Swift and Partridge were to have nothing to do with the Academy, a "permanent Superintendent to be appointed who should be subject only to the orders of the President. I had the honor to be designated for that position, although not desiring it, and received notice of it through the Adjutant General in the autumn of 1816 at Paris where I was then engaged in making purchases of books and apparatus for the Academy. The instructions I recd. on assuming the first permanent Superintendency set forth, in explicit terms, that I as Superintendent was subject only to the orders of the President of the United States. Accordingly, I was not subject to the orders any Chief Engineer during the time I was Superintendent neither of Swift, or Armistead or (Alexander) Macomb,* or (Charles) Gratiot.* In that respect my position at the Academy was s_____g_____ unless (René) De Russy* held the same position. In the Academy Regulations of 1839 the 3 paragraph was so changed from the corresponding paragraph of all precedings Regulations as to subject the permanent Superintendent for the first time to the orders of the "Commandant of the Corps of Engineers." From the time the Chief Engineer Ceased to be Superintendent, no longer exercising control over the Academy the inspectorship became an emminently useful office if not a necessary one and the most fit person to fill it was the Chief Engineer who was accordingly appointed to it in March, or April 1818.

*See Index

TO John G. Barnard*

25 Sept. 1865

My dear General

On the 22d page of your paper I have enclosed by brackets, in pencil, eleven lines which, on consideration, you may think proper to leave out, or to modify. The history of the Mily. Academy, especially its early history prior to 1817, or 1818 remains to be written. The few who have attempted to write it have utterly failed from ignorance of the necessary facts which are now no longer to be found, save in the memory of one or two old men and will soon pass away with them I am going to give you by way of episode, not a history, only a few facts touching, or having a bearing on one portion of the history of the Academy. (Alden) Partridge* was, no doubt, father to the order you cite Jany 1815. He drew it up, carried the draft to Washington and obtained Mr. Munroe's (James Monroe)* signature by surprise or coup-de-main. The trap was well laid and sprung, but caught no game. His object was to secure to himself the control of the Academy independent of and without interference from Genl (Joseph G.) Swift*, simply allowing to the latter, to save his dignity, the privilege of coming, from time to time, to look at him and report and the object would have been fully obtained had the order been carried into effect, but, fortunately, it was not, nor could it be, for its absurdity made it a nullity. Genl. Swift under the law, was ex officio the Superintendent all the time he was Chief of the Corps up to July 1817 when he was superceded by my Superintendency, and he was so recognized and addressed by the War Department as may be shown by the correspondence between the Department and the General, copies of which were sent to me at the time I went to West Point in 1817. To make him Inspector of an Institution over which he had entire control was like making a Colonel of a Regiment the Inspector of his own command, or making an officer the Inspector of himself. General Swift became the real Inspector of the Academy for the first time April 1818, but then and thenceforward, and from July preceding, he had no control over the Academy. (Walker K.) Armistead* being "second in rank" would, under the law, have been Superintendent in Swift's absence, had he been at West Point at the time, but Partridge was not ever although he assumed the title in Genl. Swift's absence. That his claim to the title was not allowed by the War Department is seen by reference to Secretary (William) Crawford's* letter to Genl. Swift under date July 1, 1816 (American State papers Military Affairs Vol. 1. page 838) in which he says "From his (Partridges) signing some of his acts as Superintendent of the Academy he may have supposed" xxxxxxxxxxxx "no officer, so long as the

*That "he drew it up" is not, of course, asserted from my own personal knowledge. My authority for it was derived from the professors at West Point at the time.

law remains as it is, can be the Superintendent of the Institution, but the principal officer of the Corps of Engineers, or the next in command of that corps in case of his absence."

In 1816 early in that year if I remember aright Partridge was arraigned before a Court of Inquiry of which (Joseph G.) Totten* was President, on grave charges of misconduct, found guilty and sentenced to receive a severe reprimand. Before and after this occurrence Swift was several times requested by the Secty of War to send Partridge away, but thinking as he then did, that Partridge was the "right man in the right place" and that no other officer of the Corps was as competent, or was equal to the charge, and being also, probably, nettled by the apparent attempt of the War Dept to interfere with his proper duties and responsibilities, as he understood them, he persistently declined a compliance, and hence was ordered, in the Autumn of 1816, to assume in person, the immediate charge of the Academy. He remained in charge at West Point only some ~~three-months~~ six weeks, establishing his Head Quarters at Brooklyn N. Y. about the 1st of March 1817, whether with or without the Presidents permission I never knew. From the correspondence above referred to, it was manifest that throughout the year 1816, if not earlier President (James) Madison* and Secretary Crawford were extremely dissatisfied with the state of things at the Academy and seeing no other remedy, felt the imperative necessity of an entire and radical change in the system of Government for the institution. The plan adopted was to take from the Chief Engineer all control over the Academy and to appoint, by selection from the Corps of Engineers, a "permanent Superintendent" who should be subject only to the orders of the President. I had the honor to be designated for that position, altho not desiring it, and was notified of it by a letter from the Adjutant General recd. in the Autumn of 1816* at Paris when I was then engaged in making purchases of books and apparatus for the Academy. The instructions I received from the Secretary of War on my arrival at West Point in 1817 (the original of which I placed in the hands of Captain (now General) (George W.) Cullum* in 1855 and which are still in his possession if he has not lost them) explicitly set forth that as Superintendent I was subject only to the orders of the President, and the Regulations of the Academy, soon afterwards established, were in accordance therewith. Accordingly while I remained Superintendent, I was not subject to the orders of any Chief Engineer, neither of Swift, or of Armistead, or (Alexander) Macomb*, or (Charles) Gratiot*. On comparing the third paragraph of any edition of the Regulations published under my administration (that of 1832 being the last) with the next edition - that of 1839, it is seen that, in the corresponding paragraph of the last, were interpolated the words "except the commandant of the Corps of Engineers", thereby restoring the control over the Academy to the Chief Engineer and to the same extent he possessed it prior to July 1817, - a most pernicious change, as viewed by me, but that is a question, it is not my purpose to discuss in this letter.

Another important and significant change was affected at the same time with the one above mentioned by the omission of the word "studies" between the word "direct" and the word "field exercises" in the second paragraph of the Regulations. The effect of these two changes was to change, completely th duties, responsibility and position of the "permanent Superintendent" at least, as they were from 1817 to 1833.

The foregoing remarks are made under the impression that you may have been led to entertain erroneous views on the subject from the perusal of Capt. (Edward C.) Boyntons* "history of West Point" a book on which you have conferred unmerited honor by referring to it as good authority.

Very respectfully & truly (Signd) S. THAYER
Gen. J. G. Barnard
US Corps of Engineers

*The letter is now before me (but was not when I wrote the original of which this is a copy) (bpre) date May 1816.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree Sept 30th '65 (1865)

My dear General,

I write simply to acknowledge the receipt, last evening, of your letter of the 27th enclosed with the proof sheets viz pages 27 to 40 inclusive. I will look them over without unnecessary delay and also the remarks opposite 1 to 90 in your letter. I will, however, reply to your enquiry as to where Luther Leonard died. As you supposed he died in the Hospital at Sommerville (Summerville, Mass.) whence the corps was removed to Newton Corner, his habitual place of residence since he was placed on the retired list. There I attended his funeral. On the same day his body was taken to New York for burial, or entombment, under the care of one his grandsons. Being in the city yesterday I peeped into the Sept numbre of the "United States Service Magazine" and finding on the first pages an Article headed "The Board of Visitors to West Point," read only a few lines and likeing the tone of it I purchased the number, but have yet taken it up for perusal. Tell me who is the writer, if it be no secret, in case you happen to know. Respectfully & truly
S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

S. Braintree Oct 11 th '65 (1865)

My dear General,

I have been so busy getting in my crops for some days that I could not until this moment take up the proof sheets last received.

No. 54: He was a man of fine talents and excellent character and would have made his mark but for his early death. I have the impression that he was Adjutant to the Regt. of Light Artillery.

No. 55 Are you sure that he was on "the March with Genl. Izards division from Plattsburgh to the Niagara, 1814" after his severe wound (wound) "through the lungs" at the Attack on La Cole Mill March 30th 1814"? I have the impression that he never rejoined his Regiment after that wound. but if he says he did, that settles the question.

No. 57 You could have no difficulty, I should think in ascertaining the time he served as Inspector of Customs at New York. He died at New York City, probably.

No. 89. "In command of Corps of Engineers at Head Quarters in Washington D. C., Decr. 22d 1858 to Jany 2d 1861" correct. but the figure 8 in the first date is indistinct and might be taken for 3. The above are the only numbers on Sheets 26- 40 calling for remark. I have looked over the remarks opposite the preceding numbers in your letter of Sept. 26th and concur in them all except the following

No. 15 passed by for the present, but will be taken up soon

No. 16 "Believed to be correct" you say. I doubt still whether he "served on Engr. duty in Mo. Ter, 1806-8." I know he did not "serve as Asst. Engineer in the construction of the defenses of Charleston Harbor" at any time between the Spring of 1810 and April 1811.

No. 19. Did not "serve" at the US. Mily Academy either in 1806-7 or at any other time -"on the New England Coast 180-9". All I can say with certainty is, that he did not serve anywhere on the Coast of Connecticut, Rhode Island, or Massachusetts and that I have no recollection of knowing at the time that he was anywhere on the Coast of New Hampshire, or Maine. -"as asst. Engr. in erecting the defenses of New York Harbor" I would not be willing to swear that he was not on duty in N. York Harbor in 1811-12 but if he was, then, I must have a very poor memory, for although there myself, I have not faintest recollection of having seen him, or heard of his being there - "As Engineer of the defenses of Beaufort S. C. 1812-13" You say this was "conjectural" but I am inclined to think it correct.

No. 31. You say "believed to be correct" I say not correct unless Buck possessed the power of ubiquity or unless I was somewhere else than where I was.

No 32 The same remark as under No. 31

No. 33 the statement I sent you as well as rember it, for kept no copy was, I believe, correct, but not being entirely sure of it I would be thankful for a new proof with the corrections and on the shape you design to have it published. seeing it in print I could judge better whether there should be any change in substance, or form As you finally fix it, so it will stand

unalterable, and if my memory is preserved for a few years after the body has become "dust of the earth" it will be owing to your Register. It has just occurred to me to suggest for consideration, merely, whether it would be proper the word permanent to Superintendent under No. 33. It is not a request or the expression of a wish for I have not made up my own mind about it, nor do I ask a reply to the suggestion

41 was a noble specimen of a soldier cast in the same mould with Wood but unequal to him in mental resources.

43 Did not serve at "Atlantic Posts" but only in Camp at Terre au Boeuf near New Orleans where he died with hundreds of others from yellow fever.

44. correct except that he died at Sommerville

53. I should answer your question in the affirmative from memory, but it would be well to interrogate his brother Henry Williams who is still living, I suppose, at Phila & who must know

61 is correct, I think,

75 correct, I believe

76. Do.

I wrote in haste today truly yours
Genl. Cullum

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

So. Braintree Oct 13th '65 (1865)

My dear General.

I am not going to inflict you with one of my unreasonably long letters today. This is a letter of enquiry, merely, and asks only half a dozen lines in reply. In 1817 I found at West Point the following records and papers and left them all there in 1833. please tell me whether they are there still - viz. The order Books for each year from 1802 to 1810, or perhaps including 1811. I think, a separate book for each of those years. I have the impression that they are missing, having been burned at the great fire. The only other book I found was the one in which Genl Swifts orders were entered during the time he was there in person viz from Nov. 25th 1816 to Jany 16th 1817. Whether it contained any of Partridges orders issued after Jan. 16th I cannot say, positively, but should think not. Besides those books there was only a bundle of Partridges orders written on slips of letter paper, or foolscap generally from one inch, or two inches to three inches wide. These were the only records or paper giving information touching the proceedings and doings at the Academy from 1810 or 1811 to July 1817. Which accounts, at least in part, for the inaccuracies and dearth of facts in the so called histories of West Point and the Military Academy. No one, probably, knew the history of this dark age of the Academy as well as I did for I had all the information that could be given by professors Mansfield and Ellicott and the other teachers whom I found at West Point and a score or more of graduates who had been cadets during the whole or most of the period from 1812 to 1817 including Nos. 91, 101, 115, 131, 139, 146, 147, 157, 165, 170, 175, 177, 182, 183, 185, 205, 207 & 214, of whom eleven after graduation served under me at the Academy four as my Adjutants. If I were asked who of all now living, knew and remembers more of the necessary to a correct history of the Academy from the time he entered it in 1814 to the time he was separated from it at the end of 1825, embracing a period of eleven years. He entered at a mature age, has a retentive memory, and the fact that he was always a favorite of Capt. Partridge is a recommendation of him, -¹ Ever yr.

S. THAYER

Genl. Geo. W. Cullum

¹No indication as to whom S. T. is referring to is given in the original letter. However, Horace Webster (Grad. No. 183) resigned in Dec. 1825, after having graduated from USMA in 1818 and having remained to teach there until his resignation. (See letter from S. T. to Cullum dated Oct. 27, 1865.)

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Oct 18th 65 (1865)

My dear General

Yours of the 13th came to hand just now. I am glad to have the copy of Col. Williams order as it will enable me to shew that it does not invalidate in, the least degree, any statement I have made in reference to any one of the officers therein named This I will undertake, not today, but soon, in a separate letter; meanwhile, please to inform me whence the copy was obtained and through whose agency I ask the information in the hope of procuring either directly, by the same agency, or through you, if it would not give you too much trouble, the order, or orders which Col Williams must have issued soon after that of April 4th, assigning the officers at West Point (excepting Alden Partridge) to other stations where fortifications were being erected, or repaired for the defense of the Coast. Was the order from which the copy was taken the original order, a stray order, or was it found in an order book? If the latter, then, in that case, the other order, or orders wanted may, doubtless, be found in the same Order Book.

The Article on the "Board of Visitors to West Point" was, it seems, from the source I had conjectured. It bore unmistakeable marks of it, It was the right thing through out and should have a wider circulation than the Magazine can give it. The 1st. paragraph "that the Superintency" etc should be extended & elaborated at a proper time if there be danger of legislation on the subject. You must contrive to get rid, if possible, of that spaniard^l wife and all. I did my utmost to effect when acting Chief Engineer in 1858, but the wife, aided I am sorry to say by one or more of the professors, was too much for me. Difficult it is, and ever has been, for poor weak human nature, to withstand the wiles of an intriguing artful woman.

You have characterized poor (John M.) Fessenden* perfectly. I regretted his appointment on the Board, exceedingly, How he contrived to get it is a mystery to me, not certainly, through the influence of any friend of the Academy who knew him as I do. He is well disposed that is all that can be said for him.

You ask "Why there were no graduates in 1816"? I can answer that question to your entire Satisfaction, I think, and will take up the subject as soon as I can find time to write the two or three sheets of paper it may require. That you were unable to answer the question yourself shows that you have yet much to learn about the history and condition of the Academy during the darkest of its dark age viz the four years preceding 1817.

You say, "No 55 gave me the statement as I have it" That settles the question if there were no misunderstanding. The doubt, however, was natural, as you must admit. A man having had his body bored by a shot passing through the lung, the wound being deemed a mortal one at the time, must have the recuperation energy of a certain animal which is said to have seven lives in order to be able a few months afterwards to endure a march of several hundred miles -

Your answer to my request for a revised proof of No. 33 is satisfactory, although, in case the publication of the Register is long postponed I might be where, without a resurrection, I could not easily help to correct any errors in the revised proof. Should you get a reply from either Henry Williams or Mr. Biddle I would like to know its purport.

I passed No. 15 without remark, but may come back to it by & by. That "ailing superintendent" is a puzzle to me. Your omission of Partridges promotion to a captaincy was, doubtless, unintentional.

I find some discrepancies in dates of promotion from the Academy between your Register and mine but the errors are mine, probably, for instance

No 12 Yours March 6th Mine May 6th 1806

No. 20. yours Nov. 14th. Mine March 14th 1806

The promotion of Nos. 15 & 16 bears the same date viz Oct 30th 1806. the former as 1st Lieut. The latter as 2d. Lieut but in 1808 No 16 was promoted to Captain, over (sloughing) No. 15. Can you explain the cause of that remarkable fact? Yours, ever
S. THAYER
Genl. Geo. W. Cullum

¹possibly refers to Patrice de Janon*, born in South America, appointed sword master, and later as professor of spanish at USMA. Discharged Sept. 16, 1863, reinstated Feb. 28, 1865.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Oct 27th 1865

My dear General, I enclose a copy of a letter I had occasion to write to (John G.) Barnard* requesting, if you can spare the requisite time that you would read it over carefully and point out to me anything therein that may seem to you amiss. From Barnards answer to the letter I judge that it was satisfactory to him. I am waiting for an answer to my letter making enquiry about Col. Williams Order of April 4th, how the copy was obtained etc. You were right in the supposition that I referred to Horace Webster.* I would have referred you to Wm H. Swift* among others but in fact he remembers scarcely any thing about the Academy from the time he entered it at the age of twelve until 1817 when he first began to give some attention to the studies. Until then he had been a wild boy doing pretty much as he pleased. Yours ever
S. THAYER
Genl. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Oct. 30th 1865

My dear Genl. Your Register says Totten and Babcock "served at West Point 1811-12, Buck in 1811, Wood, Wm Partridge & Alexr. Williams 1811-12, and that Major Armistead "served at the Military Academy 1811-12," On the other hand I have said in former letters to you that the three first mentioned did not serve as stated, and I had reason to believe that neither of the others did. To invalidate my testimony you produce Col. Williams's order of April 4th 1811 stationing said officers at West Point together with Alden Partridge, the latter with specific duties connected with the Academy, the others with duties, if any, not specified. What their duties were, or could be I leave for you to point out, or conjecture, if you can. For myself I can only say as did a certain character in Moliere "que, diable, allaient ils faire dans cette galere là." To "superintend the Academy" imposed no very heavy burthen on Partridge. There were on the rolls in 1811 the names of eighteen Cadets of whom sixteen (a) had been on the rolls from two to four years and having completed the prescribed course of studies in 1810, were from that time candidates for promotion, All went away in Nov. 1810, few ever returned, and those who did, not over half a dozen, probably, could not have received any regular instruction at the Academy. Connected with the Academy there were the following personel viz. Florimond de Masson teacher of French who had been filling the place of his brother Francis - the regular appointee - ever since 1807 - John Watson Assistant Surgeon who died May 1812 - lastly, a squad of Engineer Soldiers, so called. The numbre authorised to be enlisted was nineteen, the actual number rarely exceeding ten, or twelve, all of whom were employed as waiters, or servants to Cadets and officers or on other menial services. There was no garrison, no duty whatever to be performed by any officer disconnected with the Academy. Now can any reasonable man make himself believe that seven efficient officers such men as Wood, Totten and Willard comprising one half of the entire Corps, exclusive of the Colonel and Alden Partridge, could, or wood be kept at West Point doing nothing from April 1811 to the commencement of the War 1812-15. While at the same time the demand for engineers to superintend the fortifications then being erected, or repaired (in preparation for the War foreseen by all and regarded as inevitable) was vastly greater than it ever has been at any other time? Would not the bare supposition be an outrage to a memory we all revere as also to the memory of the seven officers in question unless it could be made to appear that they did all that subordination permitted to get themselves relieved from the ignominious position? If you answer these questions as I, nolens, would feel compelled to do, then, you concede, of course, what was the object of this letter to prove viz, that Colonel Williams order of April 4th does not, in the least, invalidate any statement I have made in reference to the station of any officer named in the order, and not another word need be said on the subject, Still, at the risque of exhausting your patience, I venture to add a few lines. Totten was the superintending engineer of Fort Clinton (at the Battery) from foundation to completion - a fact well known to me and susceptible, no doubt, of being established beyond question by memoranda to be

found among his papers. It can also be shewn from printed official documents that the work was commenced in 1809 & the masonry finished about the close of 1811, but the entire fort with its appendages was not completed till just before the declaration of War in 1812. At the time I reported to Col. Williams for duty in 1811 the wall was built up to the soles of the embrasures and the stones were being prepared for the Cheeks and arches. There & then Totten and I met for the first time and we continued on duty together, that is to say, he at Fort Clinton and I at Bedlows Island (but in charge also of Ellis Island & of the South Battery at Governors Island) untill we went to G _____ where we separated not to meet again till my return from abroad in 1817. Facts like these are not of a nature to be forgotten by anybody not entirely demented. Either they are true, or I am attempting to deceive. Take whichever horn of the dilemma you please. Fort Clinton was Tottens maiden Work and he felt a just pride in it, and could not but desire to identify his name with it, by continuing to have charge of it until finished. Can it reasonably be supposed that he was relieved from its charge when the work was but half finished, either with or without his own consent and then sent to West Point where there was nothing for him to do? I have yet to see some evidence of his having put his foot on W. P. from the time he left in 1803 to the time he came to try Partridge in 1816. Gratiot, Wood, Willard & Wm. Partridge with myself passed the winter of 1810-11 at West Point but all excepting Wm. Partridge who was on the Sick Report must have left for other stations soon after the date of Col Williams Order of April 4th. Alexr. Williams was assigned to duty at Fort Mifflin sometime in 1811 and there remained until he went to the Niagara Frontier in 1813-14. I passed some days with him there in the summer of 1812 - when I went to make a survey of the Pea Patch and the plan of a fort for that site. Major Roberdeau was there and acted as a volunteer assistant to me in the survey. of the whereabouts of Babcock and Buck I have spoken elsewhere- In reference to Armistead I can only say that to the best of my recollection I did not see him, or know of his being at West Point although I made several trips there from New York in the good ship "Engineer" with Col. Williams in the summer of 1811. Very respectfully & truly yours
S. THAYER
General Cullum

Note (a) The two non-candidates were 75 whose home was at West Point and 81 who was appointed Cadet Jany 1810 but was never under instruction at the Academy, I think.

P.S. I have written to Major (John D.) Kurtz* for the after orders of Col. Williams, if such there were & are now to be found. If recd. they may change my views in some particulars, perhaps.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Nov. 1865

My dear General,

You say, Nov. 3d, referring to my letter to (John G.) Barnard*, it takes the ground over which we have done no little skirmishing with pen and ink in years past, it is therefor unnecessary to enter upon any new battle now" I say ditto, especially, as I see nothing to battle about. We left off skirmishing, laid aside our weapons and shook hands because we had come to a perfect understanding and agreement on the matter of our difference. We both concluded that Partridges name could not appear on the list of Superintendents without a violation of the truth of history. You say Oct 27th referring to (James) Monroes* letter of Jany. 3 1815. "This was in violation of the letter of the law, but I had in some way to dispose of Partridges administration of the Academy & could not entirely ignore his position so firmly fixed by popular opinion and the claims set up by him and his friends that he was Superintendent by order of the Secretary of War -- By using the term Acting Superdt. I thought I have cut the Gordian Knot" I can't see that there was any "knot" to be cut, or untied, and, if there was, I don't see that it is "cut" by using the term "Acting Superintendent" invented, as I supposed ad hoc, - to support a theory, or position otherwise untenable. I called it a brand-new term because I had never before seen it or heard of it. You say, however, it is not new to you and prove it was not by citing the fact that "in 1848-50, and again, in 1850-55, in the absence of Capt Brewerton & Col. Lee, being the next in rank, I, in their absence, did their duties & invariably signed all official papers as Acting Superintendent" Now without enquiring by what right, or by whose authority you did so sign I don't see how the bare fact of your having given yourself the title of Acting Superintendent would authorize or justify the application, by a sort of ex post facto action, to a person who never assumed, or claimed the title and who, were he now living, would assuredly reject it with scorn, on the ground, whether true, or not, that he was entitled to the more honorable one of full Superintendent. You assumed the title, it seems, on the ground that you were the "next engineer in rank". next to whom? to the "the principal Engineer", in the words of the law. No, next only to an officer many steps below the principal engineer. Had you really been the next in rank to him you would have been, not "Acting Superintendent, but Superintendent in full by virtue of the law. "In their absence I did their duties" you say. Do you mean all these duties academical as well as the military? If you did perform them all, you did more than any senior engineer officer present for duty at the Academy, in the absence of the Superintendent, had ever done before. More than anyone would have felt himself authorized to undertake, probably. What are the proper functions of the Superintendent? In my view, they are divisible into two portions, distinguished by clear landmarks, .1st. The purely military duties, such as concern police, discipline and all of the matters that come within

the sphere of action of a commander of a military post or garrison. These, in the absence of the Superintendent, devolve, of course, on the senior military officer to whichever arm of the service he may belong. Who is simply commandant of the Post pro. tem. and can exercise no control whatever over the personal of the Academy, or its administration, unless over his own Assistants and within his own Department, if he be the commandant of Cadets. or a professor at the head of a department of Instruction 2d. The other portion of his duties - the strictly academical, relating to the studies, instruction and to the administration of the Academy cannot, in his absence, or in case of his disability, devolve, or be imposed upon any "next in rank" and must be discharged, if at all, by himself who alone is responsible for their correct discharge. They were so discharged during the sixteen years of my superintendency. I am certain they were by Col. Williams & by no other during his eight, or ten years administration, and although during the four years interval 1813-17 the same duties, or all of them may not, at certain times, have been discharged by the superintendent himself, it would seem to me due to his memory to assume that he did discharge them to the best of his ability unless there be positive proof to the contrary - The law of 1802, still unrepealed, but ever disregarded in practice, contemplated that the Superintendent vis, the principal Engineer, or in his absence the next to him in rank, would, at all times, be present and fit for duty. This acknowledged defect in the law was not cured by the Regulation instituting a "permanent" Superintendency superceding the law and although no practical evil may have flowed from it in the past yet a remedy seems to me very desirable, and I can think of no better one than by placing at the Academy an engineer officer (selected on account of his peculiar fitness) who should have a local rank next to that of the Superintendent and supply the place of the latter in his absence or in case of his disability from sickness, or other cause. To him might be assigned the highly important and necessary duty of giving his whole time, (under the direction of the Superintendent of course) to the supervision of the studies and instruction, thereby supplying a want and curing a defect existing in no other like Institution of high standing anywhere. Very respectfully & truly Yrs.

S. THAYER

Genl. Geo. W. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree Nov. 7th '65 (1865)

My dear Genl.

Your Register of 1850 makes Partridge Superintendent from Jany. 3d 1815 to Nov. 25th 1816 and again from Jany 13th to July 28th 1817. and of course you did not make Swift Superintendent during the same time as you now propose to do in your forthcoming Register, styling the one "ex-officio" and the other "Acting" Superintendent. This last seems to be a bran-new title given to Partridge because you "could not ignore his position so firmly fixed by popular opinion and the claims set up by him and his friends" etc. For myself I don't see that, popular opinion, supposing it to exist, or that the claim set up by Partridge and his friends ought to be taken under consideration at all in settling the question. If it can be shewn beyond question that Partridge was superintendent by special appointment, well and good. Let his memory by all means have the full benefit of all the honor attached to the appointment. Far from me the wish to deprive him of an iota of it. Was Partridge Superintendent by Special appointment or otherwise? If he was, then during what time did he fill the office? These and other questions connected with the subject I propose to examine in a future letter but with no wish whatever to draw you into a discussion, which, I am aware, is distasteful to you. One letter more and I have done. I ask to reply Respectfully & truly yours

S. THAYER

Genl. G. W. Cullum

P. S. Can you inform me when (the year month & day) Mr. Munro (James Monroe*) left the War office as Secy. pro. tem. & also when Mr (William) Crawford* entered the office as Secretary? The former time must have been early in 1815 for I found Mr. (Alexander) Dallas* the acting Secy in March. From the time Mr Munro left to Mr Crawfords accession the duties were discharged by Mr. Dallas. Mr. Crawford must have come in sometime in June 1815. or very soon thereafter. I have no book giving the information but there must be some one in the Acady Library that will furnish it

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FROM John D. Kurtz*

Washington 8 November 1865

Dear General,

Your enquiry of 31 October has been under consideration in various ways since its receipt. The letter record and order book of the Engineer Dept. has been examined. Col. Williams' order of April 4th 1811 opens the record. There is nothing further relating to the officer named till 1816.

Failing here I have been to Genl (Edward D.) Townsend,* and had the records of the Adjt Genls office examined. The enclosed slip will give you the very little information that is to be had, but which does not at all clear up the questionable points you are concerned about. Yours truly

J. D. KURTZ

Brig Genl S. Thayer
U S A
South Braintree
Mass

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Nov. 28th '65 (1865)

My dear General,

Yours of the 24th with its enclosures has just come to hand. I am delighted with your reply to Francis H. Smith.* It was the right thing in substance and form. There could be nothing better. These State Military Academies, I never regarded as otherwise than mischeivous tending to create or nourish Sectional prejudices & anti national views and feelings. We now know that those at the South have been nests where were brooded, hatched and nourished the rankest treason & nowhere more than at the Lexington Institute presided over by Smith. The revival of these nuisances should be prevented if possible. I was not at all surprised by your remarks touching the person unfortunately placed at the head of the Corps. I knew him to be a narrow-minded, envious, selfish, conceitd as he is shallow and in all respects unfitted for the high position

If the Bill you speak of pass, I shall regard the event as the death knell of the Academy

The person alluded to cannot be (Henry W.) Benham*, assuredly, the idea would be shocking.

I have looked over proof sheets to page 125. Graduate No. 285 without being able to discover any material error to be corrected, only some typographical ones mostly relating to dates which I need not point out as you will not fail to notice them yourself. On page 86 No. 193 "Resigned Oct 31st 1835" placed under "Civil History" should be placed above under "Military History", I think No 217 was the son of a famous officer who died Col. of the 1st Infty. 1803. Your of 242 - "The inhuman jailor of the Libby & other southern prisons" is the right thing, (comme il faut il tout ce gel fallait). He was always regarded by those who knew him as a black sheep, or rather, some vile animal

Some of the dates left blank you will, probably, be able to fill up before the Register goes to Press. The proofs as they come to hand afford new evidences of your remarkable industry in the collection of of facts & excellent judgment in the mangement of them you will have done a grand work which, it seems to me, no other than yourself could have done so well. Ever truly yours

S. THAYER

Genl. G. W. Cullum

* See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Nov. 30th '65 (1865)

My dear Genl.

(James) Monroes* letter to (Alden) Partridge* of Jany. 3d 1815 refers to Regulations "transmitted therewith" The transcript of Orders etc you sent to me contains only the 6th, 7th, & 8th paragraphs of those regulations Thinking it probable that Major (Edward C.) Boynton* has the entire Regulations I have to request that you will take the trouble to procure for me a copy therefore & oblige yours respect-

fully
Genl. Cullum

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Decr. 1865

My dear General.

I quote from your letter Decr. 12th "By the by his (Partridges) coming on the stage in my Register is not my act ** I found him in the official Triennial of yourself & Delafield which I thought was authority not to be disputed" True, The fault is mine, entirely, and as the error originated with me, I have felt it all the more incumbent upon me to do all I could to have it corrected. "I do not wish to change the order of Superintendents here indicated if, in view of Munro's (James Monroe)* order, Partridge can be properly disposed of upon which I will not make up my mind till I hear from you on the subject" Before replying, I would be glad to have my answer (if you can, conveniently, put your hand upon it) to the twenty seventh (27th) Query propounded in your letter under date Feby. 26th 1854. My letter containing the answer was accompanied by your letters of Feby. 15th, March 5th, 10th, 11th & April 4th, 5th & 6th 1853 returned agreeably to your request. The date of my letter was, probably, April, possibly, May 1854 I have intended to submit some further views & expositions in connection with the "four (prime) requisites but on reflection it seems to me best to reserve much of what I propose to say till you see what I did and proposed to have done in 1858 during the absence of Genl. Totten & also what I proposed in 1863. To that end I shall forward through the Engineer Bureau a parcel of papers which I would wish you to peruse whenever you can spare the necessary time. You will there see that my present opinions in regard to the first three requisites in question are the very same as those emitted by me many years ago. They have in fact been dwelling in my mind near half a century. Competitive examinations, A standard of attainment such as would a fair test of the candidates ability to go through the prescribed course of studies at the Academy - A permanent Board of Improvement, An Inspector of Studies acting under the direction of the Superintendent These are not novelties, They have been introduced, tested by long experience & found to work well at all Mily Academies elsewhere. Why not at West Point.

"I would require appointments to be made a year in advance" good, The essential qualifications being Reading writing Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography & History of the United States, good, I say again, but believing that these alone would not afford a fair test of capacity I would add Plane Geometry and Algebra to include Quadratic equations. With these additions the standard of attainment would be far below that established at Woolwich, Sandhurst, St. Cyr, Neeustadt, Brussels, Breda, Stockholm, Copenhagen etcetera. With my standard there would be few failures to go through the Course - With yours, a great many, I fear. "Anything beyond this would, I fear, exclude many deserving youths of poor parents, particularly, from the frontier States where education is not up to your Massts standard" I do not think my standard, would exclude many, I am (not) sure it would any who,

if admitted on your standard, would be likely to graduate but, admitting that the higher standard would exclude many youths of poor parents as it doubtless would a much greater number of the rich why should the standard otherwise deemed the best be lowered on that account? The Academy is not a charity school instituted for the special benefit of the poor. The object should be to bring to the Academy the best minds the Country could furnish to receive none who from want of the requisite talent & industry, both, or either did not give fair promise of going through the Academy with credit. The Academy should be established on such principles & conducted in such manner as would enable it to furnish to the Army the best officers possible, thereby rendering the greatest service of which it is capable to the whole country, doing the "greatest good to the greatest number"

As to the preparatory schools I am inclined to the opinion that there are as many teachers who are capable of teaching the elements of Geometry & Algebra as there are capable of teaching Arithmetick & English Grammar in a proper manner. Your argument, if good for anything, is equally good for keeping down the requisites to the present standard and is sure to be urged to that end by demagogues, in the future as it has been in the past.

"In my opinion more academic study is imposed upon Cadets than they can thoroughly digest, and professors, in the desire to teach more, impart less" Here you touch the great besetting evil (sin, I might say) over riding every other such as I presented it almost in the same words in 1858 & again in 1863, as you will see from the papers to be forwarded to you, as above mentioned You will also there see how I went to work to cure the evil. It was & is the only way in which it can be cured. Of that you will be convinced by the time you shall have been Superintendent half as long as I was, if not before. The one means you have tried failed, as I could have told you beforehand, it would. The thing wanted cannot be accomplished by the Academic Board, & even if it could, there would result another evil almost, or quite equal to that sought to be removed viz. heart burnings & discord between the members of the Board. To avoid this, and at the same time in order that each professor may regulate his own programme with no interference from without he will permit every other professor to have his own way also, and so nothing will be done. Nor can the desired work be done by the Superintendent for reasons too obvious to need pointing out, but granting it could be done & will be done by him, the work would not be likely to endure. Every new Superintendent would wish to ride his own hobby, not that of his predecessor besides, there could scarcely fail to result a deplorable antagonism between the Superintendent and Professors. The programmes once fixed in the best manner should not be changed to suit the whims of any any body Better to "leave well enough alone" than try hazardous experiments. They will, however, require annual revisions by a properly constituted permanent Board. Stability in the system of studies & instruction cannot be insured otherwise than by the means of such a Board. To see that the programmes are strictly adhered to, to insure uniformity in the methods of instruction & the faithful performance of duty by the teachers will be among the duties of the Inspector of studies But you say "I fear the difficulty would be the right man in the right place I hardly know a man in the

Army with the requisite talent, learning & book-lore combined to advantageously do the duty" Of the hundreds still living who at the Academy acquired a thorough knowledge of every branch there taught is there not one who possesses "the requisite talent" Do you say? I could name off hand half a dozen such, while you could point to a dozen at least to my one. Character with talent & industry need only be regarded in making the selection. A sufficiency of "learning & book-lore" would be super-added soon enough "I am the more convinced since three of our most experienced professors knowing so fully our wants, so signally failed when I requested them to revise our programme of studies" Here is a perfect non sequitur, as it seems to me, They failed not for want of the requisite knowledge & talent, but, only because they were professors, as above remarked I am only surprised that they did not decline the impossible task.

"The permanent Board of improvement would be very desirable if the right man can be got in the right place, but there's the rub. The Board proposed by me in 1863 (see 14th proposition) was to consist of the Superintendent, the Inspector of studies and of not less than three, or more than five other members, a majority of whom to be graduates but not connected with the Academy" Now do you really think that you could not name three graduates either in, or out of the Army who would be capable, especially after a little experience under the training of yourself as President, of performing his duty as a member with the requisite ability. If even only one of the three proved to be the right man in the right place there still remain a working majority of the right staff. In the infancy of the Academy and during my superintendency it would have been difficult, if not impossible to get such a Board, or a good Inspector of studies, but if there be any difficulty now, it can only be such as must ever exist. If the trial be made and fail I don't see that any great harm can result, On the other hand, if it succeed, as I feel sure it would, an enormous evil will be removed and an immense good effected. Let, then, the trial be made, I say. "Under the Regulations "having no power to interfere in the course of studies" The first Superintendent (Col. W.) did have the power & exercised it as well when absent as when present. The second (Genl S) likewise had the power, but, whether he always exercised it or not, is another question. The third (Col. T.) also had and it was made his duty to "direct the studies" How it was with De Russey I am unable to say & only know the words "he (the permanent Superintendent) will direct the studies" which were in all the printed editions of the Regulations up to 1839 were left out of the edition published in that year & are not found in any subsequent edition By this change every & each Professor became the supreme Director of the studies & instruction in his own Department, subject to no control, or interference from without - an anomaly never seen elsewhere on the face of the earth, as far as I know. The abuses that have resulted from this state of things any dunce might have predicted. Another radical change was made at the same time viz. striking out the word "permanent" before Superintendent and the words "and be held responsible for its correct management" after

the word "Institution" in the 2d paragraph and inserting the words "except the Commandant of the Corps of Engineers" before the words "shall exercise command" in the 3d paragraph. These changes, which could not have been made without design, effected a complete change in the office & position of the Superdt. He ceased to be the "permanent" Superdt. He was no longer subject to immediate & sole orders of the President, as every former Superintendent had been either by virtue of law, or of the Regulations approved by the President. He became a mere subordinate officer under the Chief Engineer. It ceased to be his duty to "direct the studies" He was no longer held "responsible for for the correct management of the Institution, nor indeed could he be because power & responsibility are correlative terms, in proportion as the former is restricted, in the same proportion is the later diminished. There was, at most, only a common, or rather, a divided responsibility between the Chief Engineer & the Superintendent which seems to me little better than no responsibility at all. By these changes the Superintendent was degraded from his former high position & deprived of the powers so necessary to command respect & ready obedience and to regulate & ~~keep~~ in the best manner & keep in order the complicated machinery of the grand Institution committed to his charge. From 1802 to 1833 there three Superintendents in all. Since then & in a period about equal to the former there have been ten changes in the superintendency making for each Superintendent a very little more than three years of service on an average. I submit these facts without further commentary. "With a good Chief Engineer, as Inspector at Head Quarters cannot he better protect the interests of the Acady at Washington against intermeddling politicians than the Superintendent 300 miles distant"? Doubtless, he could if so disposed & capable, but that is not the question. The question is, whether the Chief Engineer as Inspector holding the same position as that which he held prior to 1839, that is to say, without power of control over the Academy could not protect "the interests" in question quite as well as he could with such control? Can you tell me why not? And tell me, if you can, which, of all the Chief Engineers we have had, ever rendered the desired service in question. Col. Williams was not at Washington. Swift was there 17 months. Armistead, Macomb & Gratiot were there but never rendered any service to the Academy, as far as I know. They were, rather, stumbling blocks As to Totten you know what & how much he did for the interests of the Academy I do not, but am quite sure he did not do much fighting "against intermeddling politicians". This communication like many others for the improvement of the Academy which I have from time to time submitted, have led to no other result" etc ** "I asked the orders of the Secy of War" ** "The orders were never obtained & probably never solicited" ** "Failing to get anything done" would these things have been so, probably, with a "permanent" Superintendent subject only to the orders of the President whom or the Secy. of War he would have the right to address, directly, on all important matters. I should say not, judging from my own experience. I quote from

your letter of June 8th 1855 "They (the functions of the Inspector) under Genl. Totten have been all absorbing & absolute in the government of the Academy & completely overshadow the Superintendent" Is this so now? and you willingly submit to be "overshadowed" by Delafield? If so, God have mercy on you! I agree with you, fully, that the programme of Ethics is the most defective of all. Philosophy next, but I am also of opinion that programme of every other Department is susceptible of improvement Most respectfully etc

S. THAYER

Genl. Geo. W. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

(December 4, 1865)

My dear General,

Keeping no copy of any letter I write I am uncertain whether I replied to the following in your letter of Augt. 18th. "No I following your suggestion would not Genl. Swift appear to have had charge of the Engineer Bureau only from April 7th to Nov. 12th 1818? suppose after "in charge of Engr. Bureau at Washington" I insert, "When not absent on war or other duties" The answer is that the institution bearing the name "Engineer Bureau" was first created in 1818 by Mr. (John C.) Calhoun.* Until then there was no such thing at Washington, or elsewhere. Besides, Swifts Head-Quarters were never at Washington prior to 1818 as far as I ever knew.

I have looked over proof sheets to page 144, the last Recd. but have noticed nothing of any importance to be corrected. Under No. 287. page 127 it would be well to mention the Corps he commanded at the battle of Antietam--I read with pleasure the note to No 291., then whom few have held a higher place in my regard. 299 it is a question whether "served against the Rebellion of the Seceding states 1861-65" should not be left out.

I enclose extracts from the two letters that closed our correspondence on "the long vexed question" In case the views which you then entertained and in which I fully concurred have been changed in any respect by Mr. (James) Monroes* letter that has but recently come to light I would be glad to submit a few remarks on the subject

I am not a little anxious to see the President's (Andrew Johnson)* Message now soon forthcoming. The work before him seems to me scarcely less difficult than was that of his predecessor. (Abraham Lincoln)* Respectfully & truly,

S. THAYER

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TO George W. Cullum*

Decr. 5th '65 (1865)

My dear Genl.

After sending off my last letter I accidentally put my hand on the enclosed statement such as you proposed (Feb 21st 1860) for the first page of the new edition of your Register.

Your letter under date March 5th 1860 says - "Upon my return to this city (N.Y.) I find your several notes in reply to my letter of the 21st ult. for which I am very much obliged. I am truly gratified that you approve of my final disposition of the questions of the Inspectorship & Superintendency of the Military Academy." I am still of opinion that the statement cannot be changed for the better. I would only ask you to consider whether a reference to the law of 1802 is necessary & if it be not whether it would not be well to omit it as it would naturally lead to the enquiry why, (as the law has not been repealed) the Chief Engineer has not been the Superintendent since 1817.

The Presidents (Andrew Johnson)* Message not recd here yet.
Ever yours
Genl. Geo W. Cullum
Please return the Statement..

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Decr. 9th '65 (1865)

My dear Genl.

Frank Vinton* (contradicente) your reply to F. (rancis) H. Smiths* first letter will be warmly approved by every right thinking loyal man. If any could doubt he would cease to do so on reading Smiths rejoinder shewing that he at least is no repentent rebel and that his future teachings will not be unlike those of the past

I have looked over (hastily) the proofs to sheet paged 172 & have only to notice No 372. "resigned March 1st 1832" which I would have placed over "Civil History"

Your confab with Vice Presdet. (Lafayette S.) Foster* & Senator (Edwin D.) Morgan* was a good thing. I did my best to get an interview with Senator (Henry) Wilson* in Boston but did not succeed. but I may at a proper time write to him & also to Senator (Samuel G.?) Arnold* on the subject of the proposed bill for opening the Superintendency to the Army at large & also on other matters should you deem my cooperation necessary & expedient.

There are three or four things which, as you know I have deemed all important & necessary to the growth & prosperity of the Academy

1st. Admission to the Academy through competitive examinations on a much higher standard of attainment than the present one involving of course, the non-interference with appointments by members of Congress.

2d. A permanent Board of Improvement (Consul de perfectionment)
3d. an Inspector of Studies acting as an Assistant to the Superintendent & to supply the place of the latter in his absence.
4th. A permanent Superintendent subject only to the orders of the President of the United States &, of course, responsible only to him or in other words the re-establishment of the Superintency as it existed from July 28th 1817 to 1833, or later when the 2d & 3d par. of the Regulations were so changed as to subject the Superintendent to the orders of the Chief Engineer. This change was first promulgated in the Regulations of 1839.

These four things obtained all other desirable improvements would be sure to follow at no distant day. I would be glad to know whether you concur in these views

Owing to a pressure of business to day I am impelled to reserve for another letter my answer to your question relative to Partridge. Respectfully & truly your
Genl. Cullum

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Decr 10th '65 (1865)

My dear Genl.

You have already seen from my yesterdays letter that I recommend no change in the first page of the Register as you prepared it in 1860 for the new edition. It should have upon it the same names & none other, but I see no objection to its being stated under No 15 that Partridge was the commandant at West Point in the absence of the ex officio Superintendent from April 1813 to July 28th 1817 That P. had "full swing", as you say, during the whole of that period and quite as much when Swift was present as when absent there is not a particle of doubt in my mind although there is no document, or record in print, or manuscript, to which I could refer as good authority for the statement of that fact. The historian must be able to refer to good authority for his facts, but granting it to be a fact well (constated) & proven that Swift, abdicating his own duties, did permit Partridge to have "full swing" What then? Could the latter rightfully claim to shine in history as the Superintendent or Acting Superintendent? I think not, but dont propose to consider that question now.

I have just finished the perusal of (Edwin M.) Stanton's* Report & was very sorry to see his recommendation in reference to the Academy. Still, we must not despair if all who agree with us & have influence shall work zealously to defeat the Bill. Respectfully & truly yrs
Genl. G. W. Cullum

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Dec. 12th 65 (1865)

My dear Genl.

"He (Partridge) certainly must have had pretty much full swing at the Mily Academy, (ex)necessitate rei, for long periods of time while Swift was away on War & other duties" Not exactly so, the necessitas rei so far as there was one existed only for three months of term time, viz from about the 1st of Sept. to the end of Nov. 1813 when the Term expired. In 1814 Swifts Head Quarters were at New York "(ex) necessitate rei", from which place and by making frequent visits to West Point he could have directed the affairs of the Academy and discharged all the essential functions of the Superintendent in the same manner as his predecessor did most efficiently while superintending the construction of Fortifications in New York Harbor. After 1814 there was nothing, excepting his own disinclination, to prevent his making West Point his Head Quarters. This, he was repeatedly urged to do in 1815 & 1816 by the Secy of War (William Crawford)* (as shewn by his-Crawfords-letters copies of which were sent to me in 1817) who had become highly displeased with the maner in which the Academy had been & was then being conducted. Nevertheless, the Genl. declined, or at least did not fix his residence at West Point until he was compelled to do so by a preemptory order from the Secretary in Nov. 1816. If, therefore, Partridge did have "full swing" it was not "(ex)necessitate rei" but only because Genl Swift so willed Why? for a two fold reason 1st. the consciousness of his own unfitness & 2d total blindness to the unfitness of Partridge - a blindness which few if any could account for beside myself who, probably, knew both parties better than any other person ever did. That Mr. Crawford, at an early period of his administration, certainly not later than the commencement of 1816, from dissatisfaction with the doings at West Point, had made up his mind to supercede Genl Swift as the Superintendent and take from him all control over the Academy, there is no room to doubt, And that, also, about the same time, having obtained from Congress large appropriations for commencing a new system of coast defense on a grand scale & deeming the general unequal to the new duties that would consequently devolve upon the Chief Engineer, he had come to the determination to supercede him in that position, as he afterwards did in effect, is shewn by the fact that General (Simon) Bernard* was engaged to enter our service sometime in the winter of 1815-16 although he did not report himself for duty earlier than some time in the Autumn of 1816. Respectfully & truly yours S. THAYER
Genl. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Saturday Decr. 16th '65 (1865)

My dear Genl.

The Mail closing is half an hour from now & not leaving again till Monday evening I will merely acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th (post marked 14th) which came to hand only a few minutes ago & not yet read. I have had merely time to look over what you have prepared for the first pages of the new edition of your Register que Je trouve à (mong-é), tout a fact ne laissant rien à d_____ so far as it relates to the tabular statements nor have I any changes to suggest regarding the Notes save that relating to Col Williams. It would be inferred from the note that he had charge of no other works for the defense of Newyork Harbor than the work called Castle Williams, whereas he planned & superintended the construction of all such works in the Harbor from their foundation to their entire completion viz.

1st. Fort Columbus - on the site of old Fort Jay -

2d. Castle Williams

3d. West Head Battery N. Y. City afterwards named Ft. Clinton

4th. Fort Ganzevort on the North River about 3 miles above Ft. Clinton

5th. The (Stair) Fort on Bedlows Island since named Fort Wood

6th. The Battery on (Elles) Island named Fort Gibson.

He was an efficient working member of the American Phil(osophical) Society of Philadelphia & its corresponding Secretary for many years as may be seen by referring to the Transactions of the Society, & he was member of Congress elect at the time of his death. I mention these facts that you may, if you think proper, allude to them in giving his history. I once knew from himself his entire history public & private from his early youth but most of it has escaped me. He was a relative of Doctor (Benjamin) Franklin* & went to France with him as his private Secretary in 1877, (1777) if I am not mistaken, acted as his assistant in the sea soundings to determine the direction, limits etc of the Gulph Stream by the temperature of the water. There is a communication from him on the subject in the aforesaid Transactions Yr truly

S. THAYER

Genl. Cullum

*See Index

TO George Ticknor*

(1866?)¹

Dear Ticknor

I send (George W.) Cullums* letter, wishing you to read what he says about West Point. I also enclose a letter from Genl (John G.) Barnard* altho' there is not much if any thing in it that will interest you. He has been the Chief Engr. of the Army of the Potomac ever since the beginning of the War & was tendered the appointment of Chief of the Corps which he declined in favor of (Richard) Delafield,* to the regret, I think, of the officers of the Corps, generally, My letter to which he refers was in reply to one from him requesting me some facts & reminiscences that would aid him in writing the Eulogy on Genl. (Joseph G.) Totten* which he has been appointed to deliver before the National Academy. Dont take the trouble to return the letters by Mail. I will take them when I call As
ever yours
S. THAYER

*See Index

¹ According to Cullum's Register, Barnard delivered eulogy on Totten in 1866.

TO George W. Cullum*

Jany 30 '66 (1866)

My dear General

I have just seen in the Times an Article purporting to give the substance of Senator (Henry) Wilsons* Mily Academy Bill. It may be a movement in the right direction but I can take little interest in the success of any Bill that does not raise the standard of attainment for admission much higher than that specified in Wilsons Bill & that does not also provide for admission through competitive examinations doing away with the present mode of appointment. I had hoped something better from Senator Wilson " (Montes p_____ m-s) " I would now agree that not only the 4th Section but also that all the Sections should be stricken out

In both my last letters hastily written I referred to the Austrian Mily Academy at Wiener Neustadt not (Nieu Mark) as I wrote it, a very strange mistake considering that I had visited the school Ever sincerely yours
S. THAYER
Genl. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Feby 10th '66 (1866)

My dear General,

Your letter of Feby 3d makes me sad & desponding & this feeling is aggravated by the news from Washington. The neglect to reply to your application for leave has a bad aspect. Is (Richard) Delafield* afraid that your presence might frustrate some of his plans? What you tell me about Prof B does not surprise me because it comports so well with many of his antecedents, if I have been correctly informed. Senator (Henry) Wilson* has sent me a copy of his Mily Acady. Bill. It is a wretched thing in my humble opinion. My prayer is that it may not become a law. I have looked over proofs to page 295. No 662 seeing nothing calling for remark except the omission of the year after "July 6th" under No. 637. You say "why give the parentage of sons of officers more than others, if not very distinguished" I would give all or none, because a discrimination is both difficult & invidious. This is a mere suggestion but whether adopted or not is of little importance. I referred you to about forty who were sons of officers but there may be some others inadvertently skiped over up to 1830. In the Class of '31 there is No 654 the son of Major Stanton of the Artillery & 648. the son of the Patroon who commanded the Army on the Niagara Frontier in 1812 & directed the attack on Queenstown You notice the parentage of No 177 but not that of his brother No 490. If you go to Washington drop me a line Yrs truly

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

March 6th '66 (1866)

My dear General,

I read with inexpressible pleasure the glorious record of the Class of 1833. Among them are many of whom the Alma Mater may well be proud especially, Nos. 708 & 709. Have not the memories of 707 & 715 often occurred to you exciting regret that they had not lived to take part in the War? 715 was, as you know, son of graduate No 66 one of the best officers of his grade in the War 1812-15 & during the last four years of his life was the Superintending Engineer of Fort Morgan. Under 708 you say "served as Assistant to Board of Engineers at Newport R. I. 1833-1834" This needs a slight correction He served with me at Boston 1833-1834 as he will tell you if he has not lost his memory although he may have been a few weeks at Newport before he joined me. He drew under my direction the first plans of new Ft. Independence.

I have just read an excellent article on West Point in the March 3d number of the Army & Navy Journal every word of which I would be willing to endorse Nevertheless, the importance of changing the present mode of appointing Cadets is not sufficiently dwelled upon, as I think & I may wish to communicate with him on that subject if you could find out & would inform me who the author is & what his address. Ever truly yours S. THAYER
Genl. Geo. W. Cullum

*See Index

TO George Ticknor*

So. Braintree August 10th (1866?)

My dear Ticknor,

I return the Manuscript in the hope that you will see fit to have it published in some Boston paper I am unable to see how it could be improved, & dont agree with you that (George W.) Cullums* order is a "deal the best"

Genl (John G.) Barnard* was with me from Saturday morning to Monday afternoon. He read to me the eulogism on Genl. (Joseph G.) Totten* which he is to deliver before the Smithsonian Institute on the 20th instant. It will be well recd, I think & satisfactory to the relatives & friends of Genl. T. I shall go to the city on some day within a week & shall see you if at home As ever yours
S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

G. W. Thayer, President
A. I. Benyon, Cashier

Capital,
\$1,000,000

National Exchange Bank.

Boston, May 6th 1867

My dear General Cullum

I wrote you a hasty Note yesterday but from inadvertance mis-directed to Washington. its object was simply to say that I had recd your Circular of May 1st & to request the favor of line informing me by what time at latest the "Etat de service" must be returned so that the publisher may have it soon enough. I asked this for the reason that in making the corrections I may have to refer to papers mislaid & difficult to find. On a mere glance at the Etat de service I notice little to add excepting one important omission to be supplied. Truly yours

S. THAYER

Genl. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree June 11th '67 (1867)

Bt. Major Genl. G. W. Cullum

Dear Sir,

If my name shall be known among men fifty years after my death, even half that time, perhaps, it will be owing to my Etat de service in your Register; I may therefore be pardoned for desiring that record to be as complete as possible, Passing in review my long public career I find much to regret but also something I can look back upon with satisfaction, especially these two circumstances

1st that for more than fifty years from my entry into the service I was not off duty a single day & 2d that I have never asked a favor of the government either for myself or for any relative, any records at Washington to the contrary notwithstanding. In my history as you give it there is a lacune for which you are not responsible because you did not & could not know the facts with which I am now going to furnish you. The Etat de service accounts for me every year from 1808 to the present time excepting the years 1844 & 1845. The inference would be that I was not on duty during those years or any part of that time whereas I was on constant duty working harder & more usefully to the public service than at any other period of my public Service. It is true I went abroad on a Leave of absence as you will see from General Tottens letter to the Secy of War but early in 1844 I recd the order issued by the Secy War refered to by General Parker acting Secy of War (see his private letter to me on 2d page marked by brackets)

That order placed me on duty & was soon followed by (special) instructions from General Totten. I also send for your perusal General Tottens letter requesting me to "exercise a general supervision of the public works" in Boston Harbor including, of course, Forts Warren & Independence. The request was equivalent to an order & obeyed as such. Both Capt. Bigelow & Lt. Wright made reports to me & recd my instructions from time to time as to the manner of conducting the works. Should I not have credit for that service? I leave it for you to say. If yes, then instead of No 6 substitute "on professional duty in Europe examining fortifications, military schools, Arsenals etc & 1844-45 & at the same time ^{retaining} the general direction of the Works in Boston Harbor" or words of the same import. Please return the letters Respectfully & truly yours S. THAYER

P. S. referring to my note No 3 the year "1839" was an error certainly. On my return 1846 I was directed to resume the charge of the defenses east of Boston & the order was never revoked

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree July 4th '67 (1867)

My dear General Cullum,

The proofs enclosed with your letter of June 27th could not have come at a more unfortunate time. They found me most busy in hay-making and employing all the little leisure I could command in drawing up a paper admitting of no delay. a proposition for founding a school of Civil Engineering connected with Dartmouth College to be laid before the Trustees of the College next week. That writing I have just finished, Tomorrow I go to the city on necessary business & on the day following shall take up the proofs & return them without further delay. To include in your Register the Etat de service of the civilians connected with the Academy was a good idea. Yours most truly

S. THAYER

Major General G. W. Cullum

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

(July 7th 1867)

My dear General Cullum

I return the proofs with some notes written (ca _____
cu _____). If you send any more proofs to send they shall
go back by the return Mail. In haste truly yours

S. THAYER

Major Genl. Cullum
July 7th '67

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum* from John M. Fessenden*

Concord July 27th 1867

Maj. Genl. George W. Cullum

My Dear Sir

On the 4th July inst. I visited Gen. Thayer, dined with him, & found him quite well & bright in his 83rd year; While I was with him, he completed & sealed a document, some particulars connected with which I thought might interest you & help you to introduce the matter into your register of his Services. The Genl. said it was a secret then, but it has since come to the public through the newspapers; It was a bequest of \$40,000 to Dartmouth College, to establish a School of Civil Engineering of the highest class & modelled after the Polytechnic of France; with the bequest he sent a very fully detailed plan, clearly and beautifully written out by himself, as to the course of studies & management of the School he proposed - He told me that the doing of this act had been contemplated by him for 36 years back, & that having recently met & travelled with the present Presdt. of the College (Asa Dodge Smith)* & found him a person whom he thought could appreciate & carry out his views he concluded to make the bequest while he lived; he added the statement that the \$40,000 was not all that he should donate to the proposed school -

For my part, I was quite surprised, not at the character of the donation, but at his ability to make it, knowing, as we do, that his insufficient pay while at West Point, obliged him to leave that Post in debt, but I learned from Mr (George) Ticknor* afterwards, how to account for the Genls. having such resources, Mr. T. told me that he could, & almost intimated that he would, make the whole donation up to the sum of \$100,000 & still have something left, he said the foundation of this property was the percentage he recd. while building Fort Warren, & he added, that his expenses had been quite small compared to his pay, for a great number of years, & that his investments had been successful, We all know that the Genl. has always aided his Sisters, & the daughter of one of them, & he told me himself that since the death of Capt (Luther) Leonard*, & old West Pointer, he had supported the Captns. daughter and granddaughter in Newton, Masstts. - A glorious example, and by an Army officer too on his pay; surely it would be difficult for Army Officers to follow it - How are you getting along with the book. I wrote you, on receiving your last circular, I do hope you will find it convenient to make the changes I suggested, in my military Services etc I have been passing some weeks here with my daughter in New Hampshire, & among the White Mountains, Tomorrow we go to Wells Beach for two or three weeks, and after that we shall return to the Mountains for an uncertain period - My address is "No 7 (Studio) Building Boston" With best regards very truly yours

JOHN M. FESSENDEN

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

August 1st 67 (1867)

My dear General Cullum

I am truly thankful for the kind suggestion in your Note of July 30th. I retained no copy of my letter of "gift" but requested President (Asa Dodge) Smith* to send me a copy which when received I will send to you for perusal. I doubt whether you will find any thing in it suitable to be appended to my "etat de service" My intention is to pay the salary of the professor during my life time so that the fund may be accumulating by addition of the income. In 4 or 5 years, should I live so long, the principal fund would reach the sum of fifty thousand dollars. We are looking about for a suitable person to fill the office of professor. help us to find him if you can. Ever yours

S. THAYER

Major General Cullum

*See Index

FROM George Shattuck* to Dr. _____

Boston Nov 8. 1867

Dear Doctor _____

I went today with Mr. (George) Ticknor* to see my old friend Genl Thayer, & I was so much struck by the bad air he was breathing that I could not help speaking of it to the ladies of his family. I know how hard the General is to move. I have remonstrated with him on this very subject during a previous illness, but without effect. Still I could not help trying once more to enlist your efforts to secure for your patient what we both would wish for him a plentiful supply of pure air. An open fireplace in those small rooms would be such an improvement over the air tight stove & would add so much to the chances of his recovery that I can not refrain from offering my influence such as it is to second any efforts on your part in this direction. With regard

Truly yrs

GEO. C. SHATTUCK

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Dictated

South Braintree Feb. 17th/68 (1868)

Dear General Cullum,

The Book so long and anxiously waited for has come at last. Accept my most grateful acknowledgement for it, and your kind letter: Put my name on the list of Subscribers, and send a copy by Express addressed to Rev. Asa D. Smith* D.D.L.L.D. President of Dartmouth College Hanover N. H. and enclose a note informing him by whose direction the book is sent.

I shall from time to time call for other copies to be presented to friends not graduates.

Will you not have an Agent in Boston for the Sale of the Book? If so give me his name.

Now my dear friend, accept my congratulations for the termination of the great work, upon which you have spent so many years of hard labor, which although wearisome at times, must on the whole been a labor of love. After peeping into the Volumes here and there, I will dictate a note stating my opinions of the Register in compliance with your request.

Very truly Yrs.

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*?

South Braintree Sept. 19th 1868

My dear General.

I thank you for sending me the Slips, containing the article on West Point; About the same time I read it in the Harper's Weekly.

I have also read with much pleasure, Dr. (John W.?) Draper's* remarks on West Point, to which you referred me, il ne laisse rien a'desirer.

With best regards to friends (John G.) Barnard* & (Zealous B.) Tower*. I am truly Yrs. S. THAYER

*See Index

TO Robert Anderson*

South Braintree
Feb. 12th 1869

Bvt. Major Genl. Robert Anderson

My dear General and Friend

Since the sad accident I met with in Oct. 1867 I have not been able to hold a pen, nor have I any one to write for me, excepting my niece, (Livia Abigail Wild)* who now and then kindly gives me a few moments of her time, all she can spare from her cares and duties. These circumstances will account for my not having sooner responded to your most kind letter of Jan. 28th.

The proposal to form an association of the graduates of the Military Academy, for the purposes intended, I learned with much satisfaction and if effected will fulfil a wish I have long entertained. The time appointed for the first meeting has also my hearty approval, and it is to be hoped that the same calendar day will be designated for every annual meeting of the association; no time can be more appropriate. What the object is, or aim of the Association, is, or should be, cannot be better described than in your own words "to see what should be done to perfect and perpetuate this truly national Institution", our venerated Alma Mater.

That the Institution has existed fifty-one years. viz since 1817-18 with scarcely a single change in its organization, its system of instruction, or its administration, or general regulations, may be regarded a pretty good evidence that the edifice was not badly planed and constructed, and need not now be taken down from top to bottom, and built over again; yet all human work and institutions are imperfect and subject to the law of progress. To stand still and or not to advance is to retrograde.

Our Alma Mater had done a good work, and the nation is proud of her, or ought to be, but this should not blind us to her shortcomings if any there be, or dampen our zeal to make her still more useful, and beautiful, till she shall become the beau ideal I have dreamed of for half a century. If the tree has borne good fruit in the past, let us make it bear better in the future, if we can, by stirring the earth about the roots, manuring and watering from time to time, wisely, however, remembering the sound maxim of "letting well enough alone", rather than run the risk of killing the tree by rash and untried experiments. Our Alma Mater must never have a tombstone erected to her bearing the inscription,

"I was well, I would be better

I took physic and here I lie."

That the Academy is susceptible of great improvement, will be conceded by all as a general truth. but in regard to the particular improvements needed, and their relative importance, there will be a great diversity of opinions, which it will be the mission of the proposed Association to reconcile. so that all may act together in the right direction, and with a maximum effort when needful. It is not my present purpose to particularise any of the subjects or questions claiming attention. Save only the three: I am going to mention.

which deeming them of paramount importance, I would wish you to propose at the proper time, and have them referred to a special (a) committee with instructions to report at the next annual meeting. These three things, or propositions may be briefly stated as follows.

1st A Change in the mode of filling cadet vacancies. So as to secure to the Academy the most talented and worthy of the candidates. by means of competitive examinations on a high standard of attainments: Members of Congress to have nothing to do with the selection of candidates. The examinations to be open to all having the prescribed qualifications.

2d - A permanent Board of Improvement, and 3d - An Inspector of Studies. as at all the best Military Institutions of other countries:

These requisites secured, other ameliorations more or less dependant upon them, and scarcely less important and desirable will naturally follow or be less difficult of attainment. That the Academy had not the benefits of them during my superintendency, was not because they were not thought of then. or their value less highly appreciated. I try to persuade myself that the time for them has now come.

You can better imagine than I can describe by any words at my command, the emotions I experienced in reading that portion of your letter informing me, in terms most flattering and gratifying, that all the graduates to whom you had mentioned the subject had expressed an earnest desire that I should be present and preside at the meeting on the 22d inst.

The belief that I am kindly remembered by the graduates still living, whose education I had the honor to supervise, is the principle source of happiness now remaining to me. To meet them again face to face, and to pass a few days or hours in social interview with them, would afford me a pleasure I could not deny myself, were it possible for me to make the journey to New York. As it is, my spirit only can be there, my old worn out body cannot be.

Fourscore and four years lacking four months may tell the reason. Faithfully and ever Your affectionate friend

S. THAYER

(a) (Horace) Webster*, (Dennis H.) Mahan* and (Robert) Anderson to be on the Committee if possible, either to be chairman. Mahan because he knows my views on the matters in question, and concurs in them generally I think.

*See Index

FROM Dennis H. Mahan* to Robert Anderson*

Alumni

West Point Mar. 26, 1869

My Dear General,

I return General Thayer's very characteristic letter which came with yours 24th Inst.

I shall be very happy to cooperate in any way in the object you have at heart, but think that the move had best come from without the Academy, and that its immediate officers should leave the lead to those outside, as, from their relations to their official superiors, they cannot take any step that may go to affect the status of the Academy without being officially called upon to do so.

Now with regard to the suggestions made by General Thayer, as to certain desirable improvements, I very fully agree with him and have, as far as opportunity offered, advocated them. But here I stand alone, and I have but little hope of seeing them adopted. I am very confident that they would meet from every one here, but myself, strenuous opposition.

My wife sends her love to Mrs. Anderson and requests to be warmly remembered to all, to which please add mine. Very Faithfully, Your Old Comrade & Friend
Major General R. Anderson
New York

D: H: MAHAN

*See Index

FROM Horace Webster*

The College of the City of New York
Cor. Lexington Av. & 23rd Street.

New York, May 19th 1869

General S. Thayer

My dear Sir

I have the pleasure to inform you that public notice has been given of a meeting to be held at this Institution, on the 22d Inst., at 12 M, by the graduates of the U. S. Military Academy, for the purpose of organizing an association, to perpetuate the friendships formed at that Institution, and to promote its best interests. It will give us all the greatest possible happiness if you will honor us with your presence on that occasion.

General R. (obert) Anderson* did me the pleasure, sometime since, to read to me a communication from you, explaining your views in relation to the improvement desirable to be made at the Military Academy, and also to secure investigations, by a competent board, to be made from time to time - as to the workings of the System there in use, and thereby to keep every department of instruction and discipline up to its maximum of intelligent labor.

The views you expressed in that paper were very wise and judicious, and, if fairly carried out, would make our Alma Mater one of the most learned in the subjects taught, and renowned in the World. But to execute the plan you propose will require much of the same wisdom and forethought which is shown in proposing it.

I thank you for the honor done me by your naming me in connection with the subject of your plan.

You may have noticed in the public papers that I have resigned the Presidency of this College. Having been engaged more than fifty years in instruction, in the highest institutions of learning, I think I am entitled to a furlough for life. I retire on full pay. Our Trustees find more difficulty than they anticipated to get a person for the place I vacate. I have been appointed an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and am to continue to discharge the duties of President until my Successor is appointed. I have the honor to be With the greatest respect and consideration dear General Your very ob't Sv't

HORACE WEBSTER

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

South Braintree Jany. 8th 1870

My dear General Cullum

I am favored with your letter of Jany. 6th enclosing a letter from General (William F.) Barry* requesting all such information as I might be able to furnish with regard to the system of Artillery in use in the United States between the beginning of the American Revolution & 1815. In reply please inform Genl Barry that I feel honored by the request & shall, with great pleasure, furnish the desired information as far as my memory or Library shall enable me so to do; & as soon as my other engagements will afford me the necessary time for the purpose. I have the books he names viz de Schech, Tousard, Adya and also, if not mislaid, Muller & Stevens & will forward them to his address to be disposed of as he may deem best, wanting only to be informed how they shall be sent whether by express, or otherwise.

returning most cordially your good wishes I am ever
faithfully, your S. THAYER

*See Index

FROM Justin Winsor*

Superintendent's Office
June 19, 1871

General Sylvanus Thayer
U. S. Corps of Engrs.

My dear Sir,

I have in behalf of the Trustees to acknowledge the receipt through the Rev. Mr. (George) Thayer* of So. Boston, of the list of books on Fortifications and Artillery, with your memorandum, tendering the same to the Public Library of Boston; and to express to you their gratification at receiving the offer of so valuable a collection; and they believe the public who may hereafter find it of importance to them, will see in it an additional value, in that it came from your hands.

I have to assure you that no time will be lost in completing the collection, by the purchase of such books as it were desirable to add to it, and in binding the pamphlets, and preparing the books every way for use.

I understood from you, when I saw you in Braintree, that the books were already boxed; and whenever it may be your pleasure to cause them to be sent by express, we trust that you will leave the cost of transportation to be borne by the Library. I am with much esteem, General, Your obt servt.

J. WINSOR
Supt.

*See Index

TO George W. Cullum*

Oct. 9th 1871

Major Genl. Geo. W. Cullum

My very dear friend

The Army & Navy Journal containing your obituary of our lamented friend Professor (Dennis H.) Mahan* has just come to hand. I have read it through with heartfelt satisfaction, not to say admiration. It leaves nothing to be desired as far as I can see; It is just such as might have been expected from your able & practiced pen, entitles you to the thanks of the bereaved family & of all the friends of the deceased; and I especially thank you for the very kind & complimentary manner in which my name is mentioned in connection with the subject & for which I am indebted to your partiality. Mahan gone, you & (John G.) Barnard* are dearer to me than any other person or persons living.

Oct 10th when I had written the above I was interrupted by the arrival of Professor (Robert) Fletcher* from Dartmouth College who comes on business that will completely occupy me for three or four days so that now I can reply only very briefly to your favor of Oct 9th but this moment received; I am very glad to learn that you propose to write something about the early history of the Military Academy still remaining unwritten & destined to remain unwritten forever unless you undertake it. but for which there will be no data when I am gone. I think my memory is still good for every important fact necessary for its accomplishment but the fear is lest my strength will not hold out long enough to put them on paper. You may rely on my willingness to do whatever I can in that direction; I hope you have preserved the few documents & papers I forwarded you some years ago when you intended to write the history In haste with much love

S. THAYER

P. S. I fear you will have no little difficulty in deciphering this scrawl

*See Index

FROM Emory Upton*

Headquarters Corps of Cadets Camp Thayer
West Point July 9th 1872

General:

I have the honor to enclose a copy of General Order No 14, dated Hd Qrs, Corps of Cadets, June 21st 1872, which gives your name to the present encampment. It gives me great pleasure, even in this feeble manner, to testify my high appreciation of the great services you have rendered the country, in establishing the Military Academy, on its present basis, and giving it a Constitution from which untold benefits are yet to flow - In concurrence with all its graduates I feel under personal obligations to you, and I but speak the sentiments of all the Officers and Cadets under my command in tendering their respect, and extending to you an invitation to visit our Encampment. I have the honor to be your obedt servt

E UPTON

Bt. Maj. Eng. U. S. A.
Comdt Cadets

Gen. Sylvanus Thayer

*See Index

FROM A. (ndrew) A. Humphreys* to George W. Cullum*

(Western Union Telegram)

Dated Atlantic City N. J. Sept 7 1872
Received at 94 Bway 7 via Met Hotel
To Genl. Geo W Cullum

Union Club

General Thayer died this morning funeral Tuesday at three
Please frame a general order announcing his death to the
Army send to Engineer Dept Washington by telegraph if
necessary - A A HUMPHREYS

32 Collect 64 ct three in date

*See Index

FROM Robert Fletcher* to George W. Cullum*

Hanover, N. H., Sept. 21st 1872

Byt Maj. Gen. Geo. W. Cullum
U.S. Corps of Engrs.

Sir.

I have the honor to enclose herewith the notes in relation to the late Gen. Thayer, concerning which I spoke to you recently at Braintree,

Probably they contain no facts which you are not already familiar with. At any rate, whether useful or not, they are at your service. They were very hastily made in such intervals of time as I could snatch from the labors of looking over and arranging his books and papers, and are very imperfect in method and language. Were it not for the hope that there may be a few items which you can use, I should be ashamed to send them. I had intended to learn more from him and fill out and extend these "jottings", but time and circumstances did not permit.

I have besides, in his handwriting, extracts of letters to the Secretary of War, (John B. Floyd)* under dates Sept. 15th, Sept. 20th, and Sept. 25th, 1858, in relation to the Mil. Academy.

Please accept my thanks for a copy of Gen. Orders No 83, C.S., sent by your request from the Engr Office. I have the honor to be, Very Respectfully, your ob't servant,

ROBERT FLETCHER

P.S. Copies of the above mentioned extracts will be at your service, if you so desire.

*See Index

FROM Robert Fletcher* to George W. Cullum*

(Sept. 21, 1872)

Some facts concerning the life of Gen. Sylvanus Thayer gleaned during conversations with him May 19th to 31st 1871 at his home, South Braintree Mass.

At the age of 9 years, left Braintree and went to live with an uncle (Azariah Faxon)* at Washington N. H. Here he tended store for his uncle and went to school a little. Studied Latin grammar some and a little arithmetic, but was an indifferent scholar then, having little liking for books.

While living at Washington another uncle (John Faxon)* visited the place. He was from Newport. Was a fine scholar. By conversations with him the young man was inspired with some ambition. He took hold of Latin grammar in earnest, studied Pike's arithmetic thoroughly and acquired a trifling knowledge of Algebra.

While thus pursuing his studies, he was in 1799 brought to the brink of the grave by a severe attack of cholera morbus. This was the year of Washington's decease. He recollects distinctly the great sorrow of the nation and can call to mind some of the funeral orations which he then heard.

During 1801 he taught school in Washington, teaching arithmetic and the elementary branches of knowledge.

In the spring of 1802 he returned to Braintree and worked on the farm during the summer. His father (Nathaniel Thayer)* was a good farmer, as well as a good carpenter and wheelwright, hard working and economical always managing to have money at interest. But he never owed a cent, always choosing to pay promptly.

In he attended Academy then under a fine classical scholar and a man of some genius. Here he mastered the Greek grammar, so as to be able to repeat large portions of it from memory.

Returning to Washington in the of 1803 he pursued his preparatory studies by himself. Having read the classics and having obtained a good knowledge of Algebra, Geometry he was enabled to pass a good examination in Sept 1803 for admission to Dartmouth College. Pursued the course at Dartmouth, teaching school every winter, in order to maintain himself. For, although his father was able to pay for his education, still as he had a large family, the young student felt it necessary to help himself in every possible way.

During his Sophomore year he received the second honor in his class, being selected to make the Greek oration. The first honor, or Latin oration, was assigned to a most intimate friend in the class who never made a mistake in recitation. In college he became acquainted with Richard Fletcher,* who was one year in advance of him, (afterwards judge Sup. Court of Mass.), and remained on terms of most intimate friendship during life.

At graduation he was entitled to make the Valedictory oration, but did not do so as he had received 6 mos. previously an appointment as cadet at the Mil. Acad. and was obliged to depart for West Point before commencement.

When he left college in 1807 he was \$200 in debt to his father. This money he afterwards repaid.

*See Index

FROM Jonathan Moulton* to George W. Cullum?*

City of St. Louis
Engineer's Department

St. Louis October 21st, 1872

General,

Your letter of the 14th inst. came on the 18th, which brought back old associations, sure enough. It has been said by thinkers that the mind will bring back any occurrence of life, if the proper associations are presented to the mental vision: - This is particularly proved by you in remembering me after a period of 40 years. My mind has not been so taxed, for the reason, that as a public man your name often comes up in public matters, -- and thus the vision is assisted:

I will help you all I can, as requested in your Circular, - and to this end will write to Mrs. L. (ivia) D. Wild,* and her daughter Miss Abby (Livia Abigail) Wild,* to give you all the help they can. When you write to them, use the first names, as the relatives are numerous.

I apprehend that all of Gen. Thayer's papers are in the hands of his executors, Hon. Josiah F. Cooke,* Wm. H. Dexter,* and Rev. George A. Thayer* of Boston. If you will state your purpose to them, and ask them to let Mrs. Wild and her daughter have the papers, I think they will do so. Mrs. Wild is crippled by rheumatism so she cannot leave her seat without help,; but she is not otherwise incapacitated from rendering you valuable help. She is very systematic in all she does, and this work would be a work of love; she and her daughter are highly educated. For several years past Miss Abby had done most of the writing for the General, and all of it after his right hand was crippled by being caught in a R. R. car door at the hinges, causing him to lose a part of his hand. After this happened he could sometimes write a letter with a pencil, but never with a pen. This was done by shoving the pencil without moving the joints of the fingers but very little, using a short pencil placed under the fore and middle fingers, and pressed up by the thumb. For some three years before his death, and perhaps longer, he spent much of his time in preparing data for text books to be used in the Thayer School, a Chair at Dartmouth College as you know he endowed with about \$70,000, before death, and give by his Will \$12,000 more to assist in erecting a fireproof building for College Libraries, and for the "Thayer School of Civil Engineering," -- Much of this data was of course turned over to Prest. (Asa Dodge) Smith,* or Prof. (Robert) Fletcher* of the College, but some no doubt is amongst his papers yet. He did not like to do this work much, as it taxed his mind severely and he recognized the imbecility of age, and feared he might do the work wrong; but the Professors of the College pressed him hard on this point, and from revising what they had done, his labors merged into doing most of the work with his crippled hand. For several years before his death, I visited him frequently, but in all my intercourse with him, often closeted in his little study, or when out of doors, - and often in Company, I never could detect any mental falling off. He was at all times the same in thought, power of mind, and industry. A short time before the Battle of Bull's Run I spent several days in his family: - Of course the burden of talk was war, and its effects on Free Governments; In all this I could only be a listener. He gave his opinion without stint denouncing (John B.) Floyd* and his associates in the strongest terms - as the authors of

our troubles. His opinion of the impending battle was that the forces that advanced would be beaten back, and hoped the Southern forces would do so, as it might contribute to shorten the war. Upon my mentioning that numbers might turn the scale, he quickly remarked - "Yes, - and the greater the numbers of the advancing forces, the more certain their defeat," for-said he, let one Division be driven to rout, and the whole pack will run like Children from an Apple Orchard when set upon by dogs; and of that whole army there will not be found 100 fit to form a forlorn hope, unless you take the officers who have received a military education, nor can it be expected, he added, For to make good soldiers out of good materials, they must be drilled by competent men, and to make a good army out of the best men, will take at least 3 years. This we cannot now have, so we ought to act as much on the defensive as possible until our Army is better drilled." Of General (Winfield) Scott's* course, he spoke in astonishment, that he should advance the idea that a handful of men could march into the enemy's country, with scarce a necessity for the leading Generals to go with them. "The man has lost his intellect, understanding, and mental power, surely, he exclaimed: - He would not have done this - 40 years ago, - and if he orders an advance, it will be the best evidence in the world that he has mistaken the character of this war now upon us, or that he has yielded to the advice of those at Washington who know absolutely nothing on subjects like this. I asked him who he thought would make a good Commander in Chief, and he replied despondingly, I don't know, - I could name some who might do, but the war must develope that. - Our best friends, may not make the best Generals. - His opinion was that a doubt could not be entertained of the success of the North, for said he 20,000,000 can whip 12,000,000.- but the danger is subsequent demoralization. History is lost in demoralization said he, and no doubt but the dark ages were brought about by wars. --If we lose, said he, and he stopped short in the centre of the room, it will be by treachery, then we are lost indeed, for then military rule will be followed by dictatorship and monarchy, and he added with emphasis - no free country has ever yet regained a lost franchise. Upon my attempting to argue that a Military General might turn up in the South, who by great genius and popularity would whip the North or make them back out of the war and leave them to themselves. He looked at me sharply and said he, "Are you a traitor, with the blood of the Thayers in your veins?" if you are not, let me hear no more of that; but if you entertain such an opinion, you are an ignoramus, Sir, absolutely an ignoramus, Sir; and walked out of the room as stately as you or I ever saw him walk out of his office after giving a Cadet a sound lecture on his misconduct; nor could I draw him into conversation on the subject for 24 hours after it. At dinner I spoke of several distinguished Cadets, now officers of the Army, who might make great Generals when opportunity offered, if the war becomes a fixed fact. "If it becomes a fixed fact," he replied, "That subject, Sir, is exhausted; allow me to offer you a glass of wine, which came from my vaults at West Point, of the vintage of 1825, and congratulate you on your abominable ignorance. I must confess that this entirely upset my gravity. The dinner passed off pleasantly, but not a word was spoken of the condition of the country, the whole evening.

Professor (Dennis H.) Mahan,* who had frequent interviews with Genl. Thayer at his home in Braintree, said of him, - "He knows more of the war and its results, than all of us put together." Genl. Thayer was a rapid writer, but he never kept copies of his correspondence unless absolutely necessary for reference. He seldom wrote except on business, and was therefore a bad correspondent amongst his relatives, and they have but few letters from him. His memory was wonderful. After his age was 80, he would relate incidents of a local character, with great accuracy; many of them were of Cadets at West Point, from 1817 to 1833, and would correct dates and circumstances, when others were wrong. In matters of a public character, his mind was unclouded. In conversation he was animated, and never hesitated mentioning persons and dates. When he was a young man, my mother (his sister,) (Dorcas Thayer Moulton)* related to me, that on one occasion his father (Nathaniel Thayer)* chided him for inattention in church, when he astonished the family by stating the text, and repeating substantially the entire sermon, and gave the numbers of the hymns sung and the names of the tunes. His older brother, (Nathaniel Thayer)* Surgeon in the Army, who died many years since, - possessed this power of mind in a very remarkable degree. In conversation Genl. Thayer was always on his guard not to fatigue the listener, and to learn much of his history was a difficult task, for the personal pronoun I was ignored by him when possible, and if he discovered you were interviewing him with that intent, his lips were sealed in a moment. This trait however was peculiar to his father, who was the oracle almost of Braintree, and a general referee in settling the troubles of the village. He the father was remarkable for his reticence, unless on business subjects, and then great brevity was his rule.

Genl. Thayer's Sisters were however more communicative, particularly Mrs. A. (bigail) F. Davis,* who now lives at N.14, West 23d St., New York City, with her daughter Martha S. Davis;* she is now however very old, and her daughter thinks her mind is yielding to age. Years ago she was a very brilliant woman and one can see traces of it now, by engaging her in conversation. Her daughter is a woman of marked intelligence, a quick writer and talker. I think they have the printed genealogy of the family, running back to 1648, called the "Vinton Memorial," compiled by John Vinton* in 1858, and printed by S. K. Whipple No. 161, Washington St., Boston. This genealogical history shows Welsh blood on the mothers side and French through the Vintons. A large portion of English blood however comes from other families which extends through the somewhat celebrated allied families bearing the names of Alden, Adams, (John Adams,* and of course J. (ohn) Q.* Adams, are on the tree*), Boylston, Foxon (Welsh,) French, Hayden, Holbrook, Mills, Niles, (a distinguished family,) Penniman, Thayer, White, Richardson, Baldwin, Carpenter, Safford, Putnam, Green, Vinton, and Hale. One of the Hales I think was in your class: Several of the Vintons were graduates of West Point: - all distinguished, I believe. -- Rogers Vinton* I believe fell at Monterey in 1846: I think he entered as Cadet before Thayer took hold. Another graduated in 1822, some others of the same family tree, graduated about the same time Genl. (Robert E.) Lee* did, or perhaps a little before: Samuel F. Vinton* of Ohio, one of the same branch, represented his district in Congress for 12 or more years, and was Chairman of the Committee on Finance, during the Mexican War, then a very important position. The Vintons came of French stock; - I believe

one of them wrote a history of New York State, some years ago. But I am digressing; - I wrote the obit you saw in the St. Louis Times, it is true, all but the titles to my name, which the Editor I suppose took the liberty of adding. My "gifted pen", you speak of, did not amount to much, for most of the Article is compiled, using the precise language of others in some cases; The portion relating to his fortune however, never saw print, of course, and never would - I guess, if I had not got it out of him by piecemeal, having once got a hint of the circumstance. He may however have told Professor Mahan, who was his confidant in most matters. If you call on Mrs. Davis please send her a note announcing your object, that she may be better prepared to answer your questions. You will find a ready listener in her daughter. The husbands of Mrs. Davis, and Mrs. Wild, were at one time wealthy, but lost their fortunes, - and their widows are now supported by a legacy from Genl. Thayer, who in his lifetime also supported several families, and lent aid to deserving young men not his relations. Of the money he got from Government in the manner mentioned in the Obit, he never used a dime on himself. He bought Stocks, and Bonds, with it, and carefully devoted the proceeds to charitable purposes while living, and disposed of the principal, by his Will, together with the accumulated income, for similar uses. -- I think if any one ever died with an easy conscience in never having wronged his fellow man, that man was Genl. Thayer. He was particularly hard on me, it was true, at the Point, because I was his nephew, so much so in fact that I quit the Point without leave, and repaired to Washington to get the War Department to place me under the orders of Capt. E. (than) A. Hitchcock,* a very ridiculous step in me, of course. When at Washington, I called on Gen. (Charles) Gratiot,* who took me to his house, and kept me there until I suppose he wrote to Col. Thayer, who had no knowledge of where I was, and then got the Secretary of War to issue an informal order requiring me to "report at the Point forthwith on pain of dismissal with disgrace." This was the straw that broke the Camel's back; but I went back and resigned; On receipt of this, the Col. sent for me, and tore up the resignation and burned it in my presence. The next day I resigned again and with it sent a note that I should notify Genl. Gratiot of my course, and leave the Point if my resignation was refused; I do not know why I was not arrested, but instead, he sent for me and gave me good advice of how to meet the world, and bade me go. I never wrote to him for 20 years, but after that we became fast friends. The subject was never alluded to by either of us. but Col. Hitchcock in after years told me he once mentioned to him that he supposed a milder course in him might have been properly adopted, for he had set his heart on my going into the Army. I conversed with Genl. R. (andolph) B. Marcy,* about this, not long since, who knew more of the facts at the time than any other Cadet; and he informed me that those that knew Col. Thayer's reasons for treating me so harshly condemned his course. But it all turned out well. Having studied nearly all the useful mathematics under (Edward C.) Ross,* and (Charles) Davies,* I went into Civil Engineering and succeeded: Since then I have spent, I suppose, more than 20 millions of money on public works, such as Canals, (Chesapeake & Ohio,) - Rail Roads, Slackwater navigation, and other works of a public character, besides having spent some 2 millions in St. Louis City & County, as City Engineer, & County Engineer; and in all have come out without censure. I have two sons, now Civil Engineers, one of whom is named after Genl. Thayer, and to whom the sword is to decend, mentioned in the Times. This I promised him, several

years ago.

I think I have now written about enough to tire you out: I might mention, that Genl. Thayer never had a furlough since his Commission was signed. He applied for one in 1843 to go to Europe; but the reply from Washington was that they would not send a furlough, but he was privileged to go where he pleased, stay as long as he pleased, and report for duty when he pleased; and sent a personal request for him to purchase any books, Maps, or plans, he thought best for Government, - and gave him power to draw money through the Consul or Minister in any Country he might be in, to pay for them. I think Mr. (John C.) Calhoun* was then Secretary of War.

I notice in reading this over, that I have said much not pertinent to your circular, but I have written along without much thought or method, and must leave you to sift out the chaff. Please send one of your Circulars to Mrs. L. D. Wild, and to Mrs. A. F. Davis, if you have not done so.

I promise not to write such a long letter again; and bid you good night, with the hope that I may greet you before we follow the General. Yours truly.

JONATHAN B. MOULTON

* Our branch does not mix with the Adams' blood, the branch is my marriage only.

*See Index

FROM George A. Thayer* to George W. Cullum*

S. Boston, Mass - Sept 10 - 1876

Dear Sir -

My excuse for the long delay in answering your note of last June is mainly the intervention of the Summer vacation which has taken me away from the city; but I also hoped that there might be a meeting of the Thayer Trustees to consider your proposal concerning the monument at West Point - The meeting has not taken place, but I have spoken of the matter to several of the Trustees, and they all seem to doubt the legality of appropriating money for the purpose, even though the future interests of the School endowment should justify.

But I find that the chief objection which has hitherto stood in the way of removing the body to West Point, which was a scrupulous desire on the part of Mrs. (Livia D. Thayer)* Wild to carry out her brothers wish to lie in the same ground with his parents, is so far overcome, on account of the crowded condition of the Braintree cemetery, that she now professes her entire willingness to allow such removal, and, if your West Point Committee are in readiness to act, I think it would be well to make a formal proposition to that effect. And, after her, to the Trustees. Allow me also to suggest that, should you desire to preserve a record of the Generals early life, Mrs. Wild could advantageously be talked with, as there are probably many details which her memory alone can supply - I speak of this because she not long since mentioned it. I shall be very glad to be the medium of any communication betwixt you and the Trustees, or Mrs Wild -

With thanks for your suggestions concerning the form of the Braintree monument, I am Very truly Yrs - GEO. A. THAYER
Gen G. W. Cullum - U.S. Engineers

*See Index

FROM Orlando M. Poe* to George W. Cullum*

Headquarters Army of the United States

Washington D. C., Feby. 20th 1877

Genl. G. W. Cullum USA
254 Fifth Avenue
New York City.

My dear General.

Upon receipt of your letter of the 9th inst. General (William T.) Sherman* directed me to make some investigation into the matter relating to Col. Thayer. I did so and he now further directs me to write you, informing you of the result.

I first looked for a record of communications to or from Col. Thayer, which would indicate some difference of opinion. There was no difficulty finding such record. I then endeavored to find the originals referred to in these records, but utterly failed. Previous to 1866, the original "letters received" relating to the Military Academy comprise enough to make a cartload. They are stuck into pigeon holes, but in the transfer from the Engr. Dept. to the office of the Secy of War have got so mixed that they are no longer in any order except that they are arranged by years. I made a test of three letters, and had them searched for without success, however. The memorandum used in the search, is enclosed herewith. The endorsement of the Record Clerk of the War Dept is on the back. The letter of the 19th January 1833 is that in which Col. Thayer requests that he be relieved. and contains nothing except the formal request. The private letter to Genl. (Charles) Gratiot*, which accompanied it, but which Genl. G. had placed on file, probably contains some allusion to the causes which impelled Col. Thayer to ask for his relief.

The Court Martial, to which you refer, was asked for by Col. Thayer, by letter dated Novr 22d 1832, for the trial of Cadets (William) Dewey* & (Joel) Riggs* and such others as might be brought before it. I enclose a memorandum which gives the numbers and dates of the orders concerning the Court, and a list of the numbers.

It is probable that all the papers you want are stowed away in the pigeon holes of the Military Academy Division of the War Dept. - but the clerical force has never been sufficient to arrange these papers. If you were to come here, with your greater knowledge of just what you want to find, it is probable that you would be successful. At least you would find matters of great interest, and if you do come and undertake a search, I will volunteer such assistance as it may be in my power to give. Very respectfully your
obt. servant O. M. POE A.D.C.

*See Index

FROM Alfred Mordecai* to George W. Cullum*

1816 DeLancey Place
Philadelphia, Feb. 24, 1877

My dear General

Your letter renews the regret which I have often expressed that I did not keep (or rather discontinued) a memorandum of the transactions, especially the official ones, in which I have been concerned; for now I cannot trust my memory for the details of many affairs, in the history of Mily. organization etc, which I am asked about & would gladly recollect. This is the case with regard to your inquiry concerning Col. Thayer's leaving the military academy. You are mistaken however in thinking that I was at that time in a situation to become acquainted with the correspondence which immediately preceded Col. Thayer's retiring. Early in 1832 I was transferred to the Ordnance Dept. & my first employment after the transfer was in the Ordinance Dept, having been charged by Genl. (Lewis) Cass* Secy of War with the drafting of an "act to reduce into one all acts relating to the army." In the performance of this service I accompanied Genl. Cass to Detroit in the Black-Hawk & cholera summer of 1832 - On his return in the autumn he stopped to inspect the Mily. Acady. & I well remember a conversation which I had with Thayer in his little office behind the parlor. The interference of Genl. (Andrew) Jackson* had then commenced, & I said to Col. T. that, from conversation with Genl. Cass I thought that he was well informed, & disposed to maintain the authority of the Supt. The Col. said "Yes, if he has the firmness to carry out his convictions" & the result showed that his doubts on this point were well founded. The great court martial convened at W. Pt. in Dec. of that year was ridiculous enough in its mus-cular production; but I never had any reason to suppose that higher game was aimed at - On my return to Washn I was assigned to the arsenal there & remained until I went abroad in the autumn of 1833. (William H. C.) Bartlett*, who succeeded me in the Engr. Office, ought to know all about the removal of Col. Thayer. You are right in attributing Genl. Jackson's hostility to Col. T. to something connected with the career of one of the Genl's relatives at W. Pt. but I cannot exactly remember whom - perhaps a Jackson etc who had been dismissed - but it could hardly have any reference to Donaldson (Andrew J. Donelson)* or (Edward G. W.) Butler* - who both stood very high in academic & mily rank - Butler was the (cadet) comdt of the Battalion in the encampment of 1819 & Donaldson I think one of the captains - & I do not think that either of them was mixed up in the (Thomas) Ragland* - (Charles) Vining* affair, unless as a friend of theirs.

It seems very strange that Thayer's correspondence with the Chief Engineer cannot be found, as the records of the office were in regular order when I left it.

I am sorry that I cannot give you more satisfaction on this subject; but without reference to documents, I cannot, as I have said, trust to my recollection of details.

We called to see Mrs. Cullum & you when we heard you were here last summer - but it was too late - with my compliments to her believe me Yrs truly A. MORDECAI
Genl. Cullum

*See Index

FROM Alfred Mordecai* to George W. Cullum*

Philadelphia, May 5, 1877

My dear Cullum

I ought before this to have told you that a few days after I received your letter about Genl. Thayer I mentioned it to my neighbor Genl. (Thomas J.) Cram* who was a long time with him, & he promised to prepare an article on the subject for you - He told me yesterday that he had done & would send it soon - I am sorry that he has been so long about it, but I hope it may not be too late to be useful to you; I supposed that he had written to you long ago -
Yrs truly

A. MORDECAI

*See Index

Notes by George W. Cullum*

Substance of a Conversation on September 26. 1877, with Prof. W. (William) H. C. Bartlett*, at his home 75B _____y, Newport, R. I.

General Thayer for whom he had ever entertained the highest regard, and with whom he had always been on the most friendly relations, the Professor considered a severe, exacting, and just man, whose glory was to build up the Military Academy and make it the _____ of the Polytechnic in France. To achieve this hethought Col. Thayer was willing to sacrifice every interest and every individual standing in the way. In his (zeal) he looked to everything, and even prepared a work on Descriptive Geometry

After elevating the Academy to a high standard, his next endeavor was to _____ with it by making the institution known to the outside world, which he accomplished by the appointment of Boards of Visitors, the members of which were selected by himself with the sanction of the Secretary of War - Mr (John C.) Calhoun* whose unbounded confidence and support he enjoyed throughout his whole term of office. Hence the Colonel held an autocratic power which was never interfered with till 1829 when General (Andrew) Jackson* became President. This man of iron, who by nature was unwilling that any one should hold supreme controul in any thing under him, at once assumed an antagonistic attitude towards the autocrat of the Military Academy. This feeling soon _____ into actual hostility through the influence mainly of Colonel (George Wurtz) Hughes*, who had been dismissed, while a Cadet of four years' standing, from the Military Academy. His failure to graduate he attributed to Gen. Thayer & (Ethan A.) Hitchcock*, Supt. & Comm of Cadets at the time, and he determined to have his revenge by having both removed from West Point. Hughes was a man of (talent) and cunning, and being in Washington left no stone unturned to prejudice the President against Col. Thayer. He enlisted others, particularly Major Donaldson (Andrew J. Donelson)*, the private secretary of Gen. Jackson, in this crusade. Donaldson, who had been a Cadet under Thayer and disliked his discipline particularly in the affair of (Thomas) Ragland,* (Charles) Vining*, (Wilson M. C.) Fairfax* and (Charles R.) Holmes*, was nothing (loath) to join Hughes, and both labored assiduously to poison the mind of the President against the superintendent of the Military Academy. Gen. (Charles) Gratiot* then Chief Engineer did all in his power to support Gen. Thayer, but Gov. (Lewis) Cass* as Secretary of War was his official superior to whom he had to make all communication. Now Cass cringing to the power and prejudice of the President, and through his nephew then at West Point made unfriendly to Col. Thayer, yielded readily to the dictation of the President, who demanded the removal of Col. Thayer. Notice of the Presidents determination was first communicated by a private letter from Gen. Gratiot, and then a public one from the Engineer Department.

Col. Thayer never forgave Gen. Gratiot for his connexion with this affair, believing he as Inspector had not properly sustained him, and had weakly yielded to his removal.

Subsequently in 1838 Gen. Gratiot was dismissed from the Army by the President through Secretary (Joel) Poinsett*, the latter having been prejudiced against Gratiot by Gen. Thayer at the White Sulphur Springs in Virginia. Bartlett thinks Gen. Gratiot was the victim of _____
malevolence

one great man was like a tower of _____ & this was Gaspar de Coligny*.

Firm in his convictions, stepped by _____ and endurance, calm, sagacious, resolute, grave even to severity, a valiant and redoubted soldier, Coligny looks abroad on the gathering storm and read its danger in advance.

P _____'s Pioneers of France in America
p. 18-19

*See Index

FROM John Hazelhurst Boneval Latrobe* to George W. Cullum*

Baltimore June 5/83 (1883)

My dear General Cullum

Attributing as I do, an invitation to be present at the unveiling of the Statue of General Thayer at West Point on the 11th instant to your kindness, I express to you my great regret at my inability to present at this mark of respect to one whom I so loved and honored. Entering the Military Academy as a Cadet in 1818, as one of a class of 117, of whom but four or five now survive, there is no memory of a long life that I cherish more affectionately, or that is greener, than the years that I passed under the eye of the kind and just, able and accomplished and distinguished man, whose form and features will now be perpetuated in marble at the institution which his intelligence judgment and rare Executive and administrative skill brought from chaos into order, and gave to it the impetus, which, accelerated by his successors, has made it what it is today. Altho' prevented from uniting, on this occasion, in paying honor to his memory, I am not the less indebted, my dear General Cullum, to you for affording me the opportunity. Most truly yours,
JNO H B LATROBE
Genl G. W. Cullum

*See Index

FROM Jonathan B. Moulton* to Whomever it might concern¹

(April 1888)

Names Engraved on the Scabbard of the "Gold sword"

Robert F. W. Allston*	Entered Military Acadmy 1817	(S.C.)
Lieut. David Wallace*	twice Gov of Ind./37 to/40	
	Entered Acadmy 1817	(Ohio)
Mansfield (Joseph K. F)*	Genl killed at Antietam	
	1862) entered Acadmy 1817	Ct
Abercrombie John J.)*	In all the wars from 1821 to	
	1866 entered Acadmy 1817	Tenn
Otis Wheler*	In Florida war, Resigned 1844. Farmer	
	in Troy Linkon (Lincoln) Co	
	Mo 1817	N H
Capron, Seth M.*	Resigned 1827. Afterwards Engaged	
	in mantrg of wovens 1817	N.Y.
Morris Lewis N.*	Killed in Resaca DeLa Palma Tex	
	Sept 21 1846 1817	N.Y.
Bainbridge, Henry*	In the Mexican War, died in	
	Galveston Tex 1857 1817	N Y
Bliss, Horace*	in Black Hawk war, resigned 1836 1817	N H
Henshaw, James*	Resigned 1821-Farmer in Oldham Co	
	Ky since 1822 1817	Va
Morton Elx H*	on Engineer duties until 1832	
	resigned 1833 1817	N Y
Walker, Benjn*	on Frontier duty died 1858 1817	Vt
Wheelright, Otis*	in Florida war resigned 1844	
	Farmer Lincoln Co Mo. 1817	N H
Donelson Andrew J.*	(Was aid to Genl (Andrew) Jackson*	
	when he was Ter Gov of Florida	
	1820 resigned 1822 Lawyer of	
	Memphis Tenn 1817	Tenn
Baker, Joshua*	Prof at West P. resigned & was in	
	various occupations 1817	Ky
Dimmock Charles*	Prof at W Point, Resigned &	
	followed Civil Engineering	
	1817	Mass
Courtney Ed. H*	- Prof at W Point resigned &	
	followed Civil Engineering	
	&c 1817	Md.
Scott (There were 2 scotts in the class of 1817		
	J. B* Connetct & John F.* N.Y.)	
	1817	

This history is taken mostly from
Maj Genl Cullum's history of West Point
from 1802 to 1867

J. B. MOULTON

St Louis Mo 1888 (April)

S. T. Moulton

St Louis Mo

The gold head on the hilt of the "Gold sword" presented to Genl S Thayer by his class of 1817 is an Excelent likeness of Hon John C Calhoun* Sect of War at Washington D. C. now entomed at Charleston South Carolina. who when Col Thayer asked for a furlough to visit Europe, refused, but told him to go when he pleased & where he pleased & stay as long as he pleased; requested him however to collect all information useful for the army and file in the war department on his re- turn, and Expressed a hope that he would not consider this as an order. -

(Note on cover:) Acceptance of the "Gold sword" to Genl S. Thayer presented by Cadets ~~who-graduated~~ of 1817 - The year Genl S. T. took command of West Point N. Y. -

(This in 1853)

He was relieved of duty at West Point in 1833. at his own request, and was assigned to the construction of Fort Independence and Fort Warren in Boston Harbor

The cost of the sword & gold scabbard was about \$1200. On it is ingraved names of donors - views around West Point - and other devices of interest, amongst other things willed to his oldest nephew J. B. Moulton was this sword, and by him willed to Sylvanus Thayer Moulton* his 2d living Son.

J. B. MOULTON

Mrs. JANE EMMA MOULTON,

-father & Mother-

*See Index

¹ This information was added by the Moultons in April 1888 to a letter from ST to Washington Wheelwright and others, dated Oct. 24, 1853. In some instances information concerning the graduates listed herein does not correspond with Cullum and other records.

FROM Edgar J. Rich* & George Chandler Coit* to Fred W. Sladen*

6 Beacon St., Boston
Feb. 7, 1927

Edgar J. Rich
George Chandler Coit
Lawyers

Maj. Gen. F. W. Sladen
U.S. Military Academy
West Point, N. Y.

Dear Gen. Sladen:

Gen. Sylvanus Thayer, when he died in 1872, left his household goods to his sister (Livia D. Thayer Wild)*, and when his sister died these passed to his niece, Livia A. (bigail) Wild*. Upon the death of Miss Wild last month I was appointed executor of her estate, and in clearing matters up have found the enclosed military plans which belonged to Gen. Thayer and which may possibly be of interest to the Academy. I am therefore sending them to you so that if they are of any interest you will make the proper disposition of them and if not, you may destroy them.

Most unfortunately, Miss Wild during the later years of her life destroyed many interesting documents and other things formerly owed by Gen. Thayer including his oil portrait and all of his papers of every description.

I find, however, she overlooked a small red leather document trunk, such as was commonly used years ago, studded with brass nails and with a plate engraved with Gen. Thayer's name. It is in excellent condition, about 10" x 5" x 4", and I believe that the persons interested in the estate would be glad to have it sent to the Academy if you think it would be of interest and a suitable thing for the Academy to preserve. If there really is no proper place for it, I am quite sure that it would be welcome at Thayer Academy, which was founded by Gen. Thayer. Possibly that is a more appropriate place for it, but of course the Military Academy was his first son. I have the honor to be Yr. Obt. Svt.

COIT

*See Index

FROM Merch B. Stewart* to George C. Coit*

Hdqrs. USMA, West Point, N. Y.

April 26, 1927

Mr. George Chandler Coit
6 Beacon St.
Boston, Mass.

My dear Mr. Coit:

Your letter of February 7th last has just come to hand.

In case you have not otherwise disposed of the small trunk referred to therein we would be pleased to have it in connection with our other memorabilia of Gen. Thayer. I was sorry to hear that Miss (Livia Abigail) Wild* had disposed of the other data referred to in your letter.

The plans you sent have been transmitted to the Library for proper disposition.

Please send the trunk by express collect c/o Quartermaster, U. S. Military Academy.

Thanking you on behalf of the officers and cadets and assuring you of my personal appreciation of your thought of the Academy, I am, Very sincerely yours,

M. B. STEWART
Brig Gen. U S A
Sup't

*See Index

Copy furnished Q.M.

Second

2d The present mode of appointing Cadets viz. on nomination by members of Congress to be done away with.

Third

3d The admission of Cadets "to be made dependent on the results of an open competitive examination conducted with the most perfect fairness to all concerned"

Fourth

4th. No candidate permitted to compete who, at the time of Joining the Academy, shall be under seventeen, or over twenty years of age, excepting Candidates who shall have served not less than six months in the Army who may be examined if not over twenty four; and no Candidate shall be permitted to compete who does not produce satisfactory testimonials in regard to his moral habits and character, nor shall the name of any Candidate be placed on the roll of those found qualified for admission unless, besides the requisite physical qualifications, he shall have passed a satisfactory examination in each and all the subjects specified in the next following proposition.

Fifth

5th. The subjects of the Competitive Examination shall be.

1st Reading distinctly and understandingly

2d. Writing legibly and fairly.

3d. Spelling correctly

4th. English Grammar so as to analyse and construe any ordinary English sentence

5th Geography and History, especially, the Geography & History of the U. States

6th Arithmetic - Ground Rules - Fractions Vulgar and Decimal, Ratios & Proportions

7th. Algebra Ground Rules - Fractions Simple Equations - Discussion & solution of Quadratic Equations

8th. Geometry - Theorems & Problems of Plane Geometry.

Sixth

6th. The Board for the examination of the Candidates to consist of three members two of whom to be selected from military officers graduates of the Academy; The third member to be a civilian - a professor of some College, or any other person of known competency who is a resident of the State in which the examination is held. It shall be the duty of the Board to examine the Candidates belonging to each State separately, at the time, or times, and at the place, or places appointed therefor in each and all the branches required for admission and thereupon to make out a special Merit roll for each branch, and from the special merit rolls a General Merit roll from the head of which shall be taken, in numerical order, the number of Cadet appointments to which the State may be entitled.

Thirteenth

13th. A Military officer selected from the graduates of the Academy and known to possess a thorough knowledge of all the sciences, and subjects taught at the Academy to be appointed Inspector of Studies whose duty it shall be to exercise, under the direction of the Superintendent, a general supervision and control over the studies and Instruction. He will give daily attendance at the Lectures and Recitations - Notice the manner in which the Professors and Instructors discharge their duties, respectively, and see that the Programmes and Methods of instruction prescribed by Authority are strictly and uniformly

conformed to; and in consultation with the Professors & Instructors he will arrange the studies & instruction with a view to their best adaptation to the capacity of the different Sections and will decide in cases of transfer from Section to Section He will receive from the Professors and Instructors the Weekly Class Reports, enter the Merit marks in the Register kept for that purpose and make a monthly Report to the Superintendent on the progress of the studies accompanied by a consolidation of the Weekly Class Reports and he will make an Annual Report to be submitted to the Board of Improvement

Fourteenth

14th. A Board of Improvement to be appointed composed of the Superintendent, the Inspector of Studies and of not less than three, or more than five other members a majority of whom to be graduates but not connected with the Academy. The principal duty of the Board will be to revise the Programmes and Methods of instruction - to point out defects therein and to propose the proper remedies and ameliorations. The Board will be present at all General Examinations and immediately after each Annual Examination, or oftener, will make a Report to the Secretary of War on the condition and management of the Institution so far as relates to the studies and instruction & recommending such changes therein as observation and experience may have shewn to be expedient.

17th Seventeenth

17th The Board of Improvement to be assembled in special session at West Point as soon as practicable with instructions to take under consideration the entire system of studies and instruction at the Academy and in consultation with the Professors and Instructors to prepare programmes and Tables of the Distribution of the Studies and employment of time; the subjects of study and instruction to be so detailed and defined that nothing shall be left to the discretion of professor or instructor as to the matters to be taught or the amount of instruction to be given

Eighteenth

18th The Superintendent, the Inspector of Studies, the Commandant of Cadets and three of the senior professors all of whom shall be graduates of the Academy shall constitute a Board to be called The Board of Administration

It shall be the duty of the Board to examine all Text Books proposed by each Department of Instruction before submitting them to the Board of Improvement for recommendation for adoption by the Secretary of War; to recommend to the Secretary of War for purchase all such books, maps, models and apparatus as may be required for purposes of instruction also, such works as may be deemed most suitable for the increase of the Library; - to recommend to the Secretary of War such changes in the Regulations as experience may suggest and to perform in all other functions hitherto assigned to the Academic Board except those pertaining to the examination and graduation of Cadets.

Nineteenth

19th. The Inspector of Studies, the Commandant of Cadets and three other members selected from military officers on duty at the Academy shall constitute a Board to be called the Board of Discipline.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Discipline to enquire into and investigate the facts in all cases referred to it touching breaches of the Regulations and other offenses reported to have been committed by a Cadet or Cadets, or by a person, or persons unknown and to report its proceedings to the Superintendent in each case with its opinion when required as to the guilt, or innocence of the party accused, or implicated, and also, as to the nature and degree of the punishment, if any, proper to be inflicted.

Twentieth

20th. Paragraph 110 of the Academy Regulations edition 1857 to be modified so that Courts Martial for the trial of Cadets may be dispensed with in all ordinary cases, and that punishments may be inflicted in the following manner; those of the second class specified in paragraph 109 by the Superintendent on the recommendation of the Board of Discipline; those of the Third class, by the Secretary of War on the recommendation of the Board of Discipline approved by the Superintendent, or on the recommendation of the Academic Board.

Twenty first

21st. The second & third paragraphs of the Academy Regulations edition of 1857 to be replaced by the corresponding paragraphs of the Regulations in force from the year 1817 to the year 1839.

Remarks

referring to corresponding numbers of the foregoing propositions viz.

No. 2

Assuming four hundred (400) as the proper number of Cadets at the Academy during Peace and that the President may think proper to reserve a certain number of places, say twenty to be given to the sons of soldiers and officers of the Army and Navy who having no settled habitat cannot be classed as residents of any particular state, or Territory, the remainder, say 380, to be distributed among the States and Territories so that each would always have at the Academy a pro rata representation based upon population or Congressional Representation.

No. 3

Open competition for entrance into her military schools was adopted by the French Republic about the year 1794 and has been maintained to this day. ALL the other Governments in Europe have been compelled to follow her example. It seems little creditable to the Great Model Republic of which we are all justly so proud that she should be the last to give up patronage. The policy of Aristocratical and Monarchical Governments and also the last to adopt the Republican principle of open competition which seeks out and rewards merit wherever to be found without distinction of Class, or condition.

4. & 5

The standard of attainment here proposed is much lower than that at Woolwich, or St. Cyr or Wiener Neu Stadt or at any other European Military School of high standing and, indeed, much lower than is necessary as a test of mental capacity and of the Candidates ability to master the Course of Studies at the Academy; but, it is hoped that it may be raised, gradually, pari passu with the improvement of the common and preparatory Schools.

In view of the importance of French & Drawing to progress after admission and of Latin as auxilliary to progress in French, it is recommended that the Candidate, at his option, be admitted to an examination in all, or in either of those branches' and that some weight be given to them in forming the general merit roll of those who are found qualified for admission

The place, or places designated for the examination of Candidates in each State should be central in regard to population, or as nearly so as practicable, one place in the smaller States, two or three in the larger; for instance, in the State of New Jersey, Princeton or New Brunswick - in the State of New York, the city of New York, Albany, or Schenectady and Geneva, or Rochester - in the State of Massachusetts, Boston & Springfield, or Amherst. For the examination of Candidates belonging to States on the Pacific, it may, perhaps, be expedient to constitute a separate Board.

The Regulation requiring the Candidate to repair to West Point to be examined for admission, he paying his own expenses to that place and, if rejected, back to his home is not only unequal and often oppressive in its operation, but also, in effect, excludes many of the poorer class from the benefits of an Institution that should be equally open to all.

Thirteenth (13th)

The office of Inspector of Studies at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich was created in the year 1772 and still exists. It is filled by a Lieut. Colonel of Engineers, or Artillery whose salary is fifteen hundred dollars (£500) in addition to his Corps, or Regimental pay and allowances amounting in the whole to three thousand five hundred dollars (\$3,500) The officer performing the corresponding duty on the Continent is styled Director of Studies.

From the year 1817 when the present system of studies & instruction was established to the year 1834, or later, the Superintendent was charged with the direction of the Studies, a duty which he discharged to the best of his ability as far as it was consistent with his other indispensable duties, but the duty is such as to require, for its proper performance, the whole time and attention of an officer. Owing to a change in the Regulations first promulgated in 1839 it ceased to be the duty of the Superintendent to "direct the Studies" and ever since each professor has been the supreme director of his own Department. The evils, naturally and inevitably, resulting from there being no officer at the Academy charged with the general control of the studies have, it is believed, been increasing from year to year and are such as to demand a speedy remedy. The Inspector of Studies should rank next to the Superintendent and supply the place of the latter when absent.

14th

The utility of a properly constituted Body to point out defects and suggest ameliorations in the system of Studies and Instruction at the Academy seems too obvious to need elucidation. Such a Body styled Board of Improvement (Conseil de perfectionment) has been found necessary to the proper working of the machinery of instruction at all the best Military Schools in other Countries.

The Board should be of a permanent character in order that the Academy may have the benefit of its (the Boards) accumulated experience and be the more secure against rash experiments and innovations made to cure imaginary evils, or effect chimerical improvements. A system found to have worked well for many years should not be tampered with, or be subject to other changes than such as enlightened experience should indicate to be safe and expedient.

17th

The intent of the 17th proposition is to accomplish, in the best manner, (better than can be done by any Academic Board) the object contemplated by the 35th paragraph of the Academy Regulations (38th of the edition 1832) which, as far as I know, has remained a dead letter up to the present time, although some steps were taken in that view during the time I commanded the Corps of Engineers (1858) in the absence of Genl. (Joseph G.) Totten.* The Third Article of the Regulations, by prescribing merely a Syllabus, or outline of the studies, leaving the filling in to the Professor (how he will fill it in & stuff it in might be predicted, even if past experience did not show) thereby makes him, in fact, the constructor of his own Programme. The natural consequence is that the pupil is overtaken ___ "crammed" In other words, more mental food is given than the mind is able to digest. There is, also, too much abstract theory - not enough of the practical applications to impress the theory on the Memory so as to make it durable and practically useful.

The nature of the evil being known and its cause or causes also, the remedy cannot be difficult. There must be 1st. Programmes prescribed by Authority describing the subjects to be taught & the instruction to be given in such minute detail that nothing shall be left to the discretion of Professor, or Instructor as to their kind or amount. There need be only one Programme for each of the Departments of Ethics, French, Drawing & of Chemistry, Mineralogy & Geology, but, for Mathematics Natl. Philosophy and Engineering, each, two Programmes - a maximum and a minimum; the former adapted to the supposed capacity of the first, or highest section; the latter comprising only those subjects and portions of subjects in which every pupil must pass a satisfactory examination before he can be advanced to a higher class, or be recommended for a Commission. The maximum Programme to be modified for the intermediate Section, or Sections between the highest and lowest by excluding therefrom more or less of the more difficult subjects & investigations (in the discretion of the Inspector of Studies) so that the instruction shall be duly proportioned to the capacity of said intermediate Section, or Sections.

2d. It must be made the duty of the Inspector of Studies to see that all the Programmes prescribed by Authority are strictly adhered to and that the lessons given out are proportional to the time set apart for their study. The preliminary steps to be taken for procuring these Programmes are 1st. to require each Professor, or Instructor at the head of a Department to prepare a detailed programme of the instruction given in his Department in the last Academical year, divided into lessons, with an estimate, founded on experience, of the time, in hours, a pupil of fair abilities, with proper diligence, will require to master each subject and lesson stating, separately, the time necessary for preparation and that for attendance at Recitations and Lectures. The sums of the hours in the programmes will, probably, be found to exceed the time appropriated to study & instruction during the entire Term of four years, requiring that the programmes be reduced by eliminations to their proper proportions and reconciled with one another which will be done, of course, by the Board of Improvement to whom the professors Programmes will be referred for revision And it is recommended that the Board be instructed, at the same time, to take under

consideration the expediency of the following changes in the studies and Instruction and their distribution

1st. The Spanish Language to be stricken from the regular Course of Studies and taught, only as a voluntary study, to such Cadets as, in the opinion of the Academic Board, are capable, from previous acquirements, of pursuing the study without detriment to their progress in the obligatory studies.

2d. Paragraph 23 of the Academy Regulations to be modified so as to read as follows

French Grammar - Reading French with a correct pronunciation
Translating French into English, readily and correctly.

3d. The subjects enumerated in paragraph 25 to be greatly abridged and only so much of Chemistry and its applications taught, and so much of Mineralogy and Geology, as are necessary, or essentially useful to the military Engineer, or Artillery officer. "Bleaching" "Tanning" "Dyeing" "Gilding" "Distillery" and the like are out of place at West Point.

4th. The Course of Ethics embracing Litterature including English Grammar, Logics, Rhetorick and numerous other branches, to be greatly curtailed & the time allotted to it proportionally lessened. English Grammar & Geography (being included in the proposed requisites for admission). Political Geography and the History of Literature may well be eliminated, and also Civil History excepting a few Lectures to teach the manner in which History should be studied. Physical geography, if retained, might be transferred to the Department of Natural Philosophy, or taught in connection with geology. "Military Law" should be taught by a Military officer

5th The Course of Military Engineering to be expanded and not less than six hours daily, during one yearly Term allotted to the study and to the Drawings connected therewith

6th Only so much of Civil Engineering to be taught as is necessary to the Military Engineer

7th The studies of the First Class (4th year) to embrace none other than military subjects embraced in the Courses of Military Engineering, Ordnance etc etc.

8th The instruction given by the Professor of Drawing to be confined to the first and second years (3d & 4th Classes) and the studies during those years to embrace Mathematics French, and Drawing, exclusively.

9th Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Chemistry Mineralogy and Geology, Civil Engineering, Ethics, Constitutional & National Law and all other subjects taught by the Prof of Ethics (for all which when restricted as herein proposed there would be ample time) to be confined to the third year (2d Class) to the exclusion of all other branches. Provided, however, that the Professor of Ethics may, if it be deemed expedient, be required to deliver a Course of Lectures on Saturday afternoon or Sunday of each week, or semi monthly to the 1st Class or before the whole Corps of Cadets on Moral Philosophy and the Evidences of Christianity.

10th. The Theories of Tactics (Infantry, Artillery and Cavalry to be taught during Encampment only excepting so much thereof as may be comprised in the fourth years Course.

11th. Not less than Ten hours to be given to study, daily, during Term time viz from Sept 1st to the close of the General Examination in June.

12th During the Term of Study, to be no field, or other out door exercises before 4 O'Clock P.M. or after 6 O'Clock P.M.

It seems desirable that the Board be instructed, also, to take under consideration the sixth Article of the Academy Regulations, especially, paragraphs 62, 65 & 67 prescribing the mode of conducting the examinations for the advancement of Cadets from Class to Class and for Commissions in the Army, and the mode of forming the Merit rolls both of which are believed to be susceptible of material improvement. The Committees should be so composed that every member of each shall, by a thorough and familiar knowledge of the subjects, be capable of forming an intelligent Judgment of the performance of the examinee; and the number of the Committees should be such that, by their simultaneous action, the General Examination may be confined within the narrowest limits, as to time, compatible with a thorough and searching examination of the of the pupils. These desiderata may, it is believed be best secured by means of seven Committees composed as follows. 1st. For Mathematics The Professor, the principal Assistant Professor, the Instructor of the Section under examination together with not less than two other members not connected with the Academy selected from experience and successful teachers of Mathematics

2d. For Natural Philosophy, and for Chemistry Mineralogy and Geology, a single Committee consisting of the two Professors, their principal Assistant Professors, the Instructor of the Section under examination, together with not less than two other members of known competency not connected with the Academy

3d for Engineering, The Professor and the principal Assistant Professor, the Instructor of the Section under examination, together with not less than two officers of the Corps of Engrs not under the grade of Captain and not connected with the Academy.

4th For the Artillery, Ordnance, Cavalry and Infantry, a single Committee consisting of the Instructors of those branches, together with at least three officers, graduates of the Academy not under the grade of a field officer selected from the Artillery, Cavalry and Infantry to represent those Arms, respectively.

5th, 6th & 7th. For Ethics, French and Drawing, each a Committee consisting of the Professor, the principal Assistant Professor, the Instructor of the Section under examination, together with not less than two members appointed by the Superintendent from members of the Academic Board not on other Committees, or from the Board of Visitors, or from acting Assistant Professors, or other officers on duty at the Academy. The Superintendent and the Inspector of Studies to be ex officio members of any of the Committees and when present to preside therein.

The duration of the Annual Examination will, necessarily, be determined by the time taken to examine the pupils in Mathematics That time being more than is required by any other examining Committee to finish its task. If, owing to the increase of the Corps of Cadets, or any other cause, the examination in Mathematics cannot be brought within the limit of eighteen working days, it may be expedient to constitute two Committees for that subject - a contingency that would involve no difficulty, as in case of such increase the number of Mathematical Instructors must also be increased.

2d. The number representing the value, or weight given to the different subjects are not apportioned according to their relative importance, or to the time allotted to the study of those

subjects, nor according to any other Just principle, as far as I can see. In forming the General Merit roll of the 2d, 3d, & 4th Classes too much weight, I think, is allowed to conduct. If any weight at all be allowed, it should be merely enough to turn the scale when merit in scholarship is equally balanced. To give it more weight is simply to diminish the incentives to study - The sole object of the Merit roll system. The Army of Discipline if skilfully wielded is strong enough, of itself, needing not to be aided in a way that is injurious to progress in study.

19 & 20 At Woolwich Acady at an early period of its existence, Cadets were brought before a Court Martial in order to their dismissal, but the practice was not found to work well and was soon discontinued. At no other foreign Military School, if I am correctly informed, has a pupil, at any time, been brought before a Court Martial. At West Point, from the year 1802 when the Academy was founded up to about the year 1819, no Cadet, as far as I ever heard, was brought before a Court Martial. During that period the power of dismissal rested with the Superintendent whose action in every case was final, but in cases requiring investigation the accused was allowed the benefit of a Court, or Commission of Enquiry composed of officers on duty at West Point, or of officers and Cadets and in some cases wholly of Cadets; and in no instance, that I ever heard of, was the Power called in question, or the manner in which it was exercised by the Superintendent complained of. Among the objections made to Courts Martial for the trial of Cadets are the following
1st. Their demoralizing tendency, the Cadet witnesses being under a strong temptation to conceal, or withhold their knowledge of the facts when the punishment of a beloved comrad is in question. 2d The impunity afforded to the most criminal of the offenders Those who plan, instigate, pull the wires, but take care so to manage that no legal evidence can be produced against them. Nevertheless, these invisible workers of iniquity are well known to the Authorities, and unless they may be removed without the formality of a trial by Courts Martial, a sound state of Discipline and Morals at the Academy is out of the question. If there be any law which, by a fair construction, prohibits the dismissal of a Cadet unless by sentence of a Court Martial, it should be repealed and the President left free to establish such Rules and Regulations for the government of the Academy as may seem to him necessary and proper

21

The paragraphs proposed to be restored (see Academy Regulations edition 1832 Or any earlier edition published after 1817) are as follows:

Paragraph 2 "A permanent Superintendent of the Academy appointed from the Corps of Engineers will have the immediate government of the Institution and be held responsible for its correct management. He will direct the studies, field exercises and all other Academic duties and all Professors, Teachers Academic officers and Cadets shall be under his command. He will render all Returns Estimates and Communications to the Inspector"

Paragraph 3 "No officer of the Army of any rank whatever, shall exercise command in the Military Academy, unless subordinate to the Superintendent"

By comparing the foregoing with the corresponding paragraphs now in force, which were first published as they now stand, in the 1839 edition of the Regulations, it is seen that the words underscored in the 2d paragraph were stricken out without other change and that in place of the words underscored in the 3d paragraph were inserted the following words "except the Commandant of the Corps of Engineers" These changes, which could not have been made without design, effected a notable change in the government of the Academy and in the office and position of the Superintendent. He was no longer subject to the immediate and sole orders of the President and Secretary of War, but became a mere subordinate officer under the Chief Engineer. It ceased to be his duty to "direct the studies" He was no longer "held responsible for the correct management" of the Institution, nor, indeed, could be, because power and responsibility are correlative terms. In proportion as the former is restricted the latter is diminished. There remained only a common, or rather a divided responsibility subsisting between the Chief Engineer and Superintendent which seems to me little better than no responsibility at all.

The office of "permanent superintendent" subject only to the orders of the President and responsible to him alone was created by President (James) Madison* (after consultation with the Mr (William) Crawford* Secretary of War and Mr Munro (James Monroe)* soon afterwards elected President) from a perfect conviction or its necessity, looking to the previous history of the Academy. The person designated to fill the office, being then in Europe, on special service, did not enter upon the discharge of its duties until July 1817. He was continued in it for the full period of sixteen years terminating in 1833 Since then there have been eight (now ten) changes in the office, each change bringing about, naturally, some change, for the better or for the worse, in the management of the Institution, each riding his own hobby.

There are, probably, few persons in this, or any other Country, who possess the peculiar qualities fitting them, in all respects to direct and govern a Grand Military School such as that at West Point and when the person selected for the position is found on trial to be "the right man in the right place", his accumulated experience becomes invaluable and an over-ruling necessity only would justify his removal.

*See Index

(No Date)

Regulations relative to the
admission of Cadets into the Military Academy

As frequent inquiries are made in regard to the mode of procuring admission into the Military Academy all persons interested in the subject are hereby informed that Applications should be made by letter to the Secretary of War. Applications can be made at any time by the Candidate himself, his parent, guardian, or any of his friends. No preference will be given to applications on Account of priority, nor will any application be entered in the register where the Candidate is under or above the prescribed age, nor will any application be considered in cases where the age and other qualifications of the Candidate are not stated. The fixed abode of the Candidate must be set forth in the application.

Applications, if not renewed Annually, will not be reconsidered, this renewal may be effected by letter addressed to the Secretary of War, merely stating the fact of such renewal.

In the Month of February or March Annually, the Appointments are made from among the Applicants whose names are on the register, care being taken to distribute them as equally as circumstances will permit, over the various sections of the Country in proportion to the number of Senators and Representatives in Congress. As a General remark, it may be observed that no certain information can be given as to the probable success of a Candidate before the arrival of the period for making the selections, as the number of vacancies, and other Circumstances proper to be taken into view, cannot be anticipated. Persons, therefore, making applications, must not expect to receive information on this point. -

All applications are regularly registered to be considered at the proper time.

Qualifications

Each Candidate must not be under Sixteen nor over Twenty-one years of age, nor less height than four feet nine inches; must be free from any deformity, disease, or infirmity, which would render him unfit for the Military Service, and from any disorder of an infectious or immoral character; He must be able to read and write well, and to perform with facility and accuracy, the various operations of the four ground rules of Arithmetic, of Reduction, of Simple and Compound proportion, and of Vulgar and Decimal Fractions. -

(J. J. Branden Lith.)

FROM Joseph G. Swift*

(No date)

to the Board of Constructors their appropriate Reputation. -

The functions of Rank do not apply to Engineers in the same way as they do to Cavalry or Infantry; for each Conductor of a Work is necessarily insulated in his Command for the time when a Superior is not at hand, & therefore can be the only Responsible Person on the Work which he directs, & while his Office of Disburser of Money is united to that of Constructor, he must be the accountable officer. - The question of Engineer Rank involves a consideration of the Reciprocity of Duty & Rights in a government of Law as compared with Governments of Individual Will.

The Permanency of Forts, one of the chief elements of a true Economy, is so dependent on Math. & Chemical Philosophy as applied to Construction, Material, (Currents) & Drainage, in forming & executing a Plan of a Fort, that it will account to you for my not treating the subject of the President or his Cabinet as Engineers.

I wish Col. that you would Read this over & let me know at once what I may add or omit Your friend J. G. SWIFT

P.S. I blotted & tore off the piece below ----

*See Index

TO Ichabod Chadbourne*

(no date)

My dear friend,

At the time I alloted to visit Eastport I was kept at home by a sad duty, that of doing what I could for the comfort of my niece.¹ She was buried last week. I am now & shall be for several weeks busily occupied by public & private affairs & considering the lateness' of the Season & the state of my health it is doubtful, to say the least, whether I shall not be compelled to postpone, to another year, the long contemplated visit from which I promised myself a full measure of happiness.

Hoping to see you here shortly & also to hear that the temprance party have elected you their worthy representative to the Legislature I remain ever your friend
S. THAYER

Col. I. R. Chadbourne
Eastport Me.

¹Possibly refers to Dorcas Faxon Wild*, who died on 31 August 1852.

*See Index

TO George Ticknor*

(No date)

Saturday, Sept 23d

My dear Ticknor,

Sorry to learn that you and Mrs. Ticknor had been ill but the more glad that you are at home again both in good health. I too have been unwell owing to an attack of cholera Morbus. This with vis-inertia - a constitutional complaint have prevented me from going to the city ever since my last call at your house, but I shall make an effort to go on some day next week - when if I find you disengaged we will have, if you please, half an hour, or an hours talk on subjects that most interest us

I enclose a letter from Mrs. (Sally Swift) Richards* the only surviving daughter of Genl. (Joseph G.) Swift* - one of the best women in the world as her husband (Peter Richards)* is one of the best of men. Keep the letter 'till I come

With kindest regards to Mrs. Ticknor I am truly yours
S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George Ticknor*

(No date)

Fort Warren Oct. 16th.

My dear Ticknor,

I have just now began to do the work you assigned to me but having here no Catalogues or Notices of publications to refer to I am bro't to a stand-still I hope however that I shall soon be able to resume the work under more favorable circumstances. Meanwhile please to look over the unfinished List send herewith as I wish to consult you about it. I will wait upon you in a day or two on my return from Braintree Yours ever

S. THAYER

*See Index

TO George Ticknor*

(No date)

Fort Warren Oct. 20th

My dear Ticknor

I return your Foreign Quarterly. Have you the wanting volumes viz from July 1846 to the present time? If so please send them by the bearer. If you have them not I can see them, doubtless, at the Atheneum.

I send a few additional Titles of books. Please say whether I have written them as you wish & whether I shall inscribe in like manner on separate slips the titles in my former List Yours ever

S. THAYER

*See Index

(No date)

General Thayer was born in Braintree, near Boston, Mass., June 9, 1785; received a classical education at Dartmouth College, N.H.; and Feb. 23, 1808 was graduated at the U. S. Military Academy, and thence was promoted a Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers, in which, after passing through all the successive grades including Colonel, he continued till June 1, 1863, when age and feeble health terminated his active career of more than half a century of faithful service and continued usefulness.

Called to the field in 1812, though yet a Lieutenant, he became Chief Engineer to Maj. Gen. (Henry) Dearborn* commanding on the Niagara frontier; in 1813 the right division of the Northern Army under Maj. General (Wade) Hampton* on the Champlain line of operations; and in 1814 of the forces of Brig. Gen. Moses Porter* defending Norfolk, Va., where, for his "distinguished and meritorious services", he was brevetted a Major. Scarce was the war with Great Britain terminated, when Major Thayer was ordered to accompany Commodore (Stephen) Decatur* on the expedition against Algiers; but the news of Napoleon's* return from Elba changed his destination from Africa to Europe, which he ardently anticipated reaching in time to participate with the French Army in the coming campaign of 1815. On arriving in the Straits of Dover his cherished hopes were blasted by the fatal tidings of Waterloo and the disastrous termination of the "Hundred Days". However, he garnered up rich treasures of military knowledge in witnessing the great evolutions and stern discipline of the Allied armies encamped before Paris, and in carefully studying the fortifications, governmental establishments, and military schools of France and Belgium, thus laying the broad basis, in his expansive mind, of his coming conspicuous career. Upon his return home he was ordered to the command of the Military Academy at West Point, of which he assumed the Superintendency July 28, 1817.

Fifteen years before, March 16, 1802, this now renowned institution had been established through the persevering efforts of (George) Washington*, his ablest generals, and the patriot statesmen of the Revolution, their experience and observation during that struggle having clearly demonstrated to them that the art of war demanded much previous study and that military education and training were obvious expedients required for "the security of a nation".

Feeble at first in numbers and organization this West Point Academy tenderly nursed by its first distinguished Chief Col. Jonathan Williams* went on producing all the effects, which its limited scale permitted, till 1809, when the Secretary of War - William Eustis* - who should have been its parent head, left it an abandoned foundling to almost perish amid the highlands of the Hudson. Notwithstanding war was imminent and 206 cadets were authorized by law, he

appointed but two _____ in the three years preceeding the act of April 29, 1812 re-organizing the Academy. Hence, instead of enlarging the supply of educated talent to direct the impending storm, he sought to repeat the (fable) of trying ^{the Secretary} ~~to strangle the infant Hercules in its cradle~~ ^{the Academy} ~~having virtually ceased to exist from Nov 1811 till he was forced-~~ he was succeeded by more enlightened Secretaries - (John)

Armstrong*, (James) Monroe*, and (William H.) Crawford* and (George) Graham* - who materially meliorated the condition of the institution; but a state of war and the derangements consequent thereon deferred till 1817 the application of the sovereign remedy to existing evils - a superintendent competent to lay a broad foundation of scientific instructions and sagaciously to direct the advancement of the Military Academy to fulfill its high destiny.

On the resignation of Col. Jonathan Williams, July 31, 1812, the institution lost its first distinguished chief who had tenderly nursed it from its birth. From that time till the termination of the war with Great Britain, which absorbed the services in the field of our ablest engineers, the Academy had no permanent superintendent. After the war, except for a few weeks, till July 28, 1817 the local command at West Point was held by Capt. Alden Partridge*, who, though a martinet drill officer, had neither the talents nor other essentials for his high calling.

On assuming his responsible trust in 1817, Major Thayer found the Military Academy in a chaotic condition without system or regularity in its administration. The number of Cadets present then mostly dispersed on leave of absences did not exceed half of those authorized by law, and these had been admitted without regard to age or ^{12 to 36} qualifications. ~~Several were married~~ Even preliminary mental and physical examinations had been dispensed with, and hence the total unfitness of many for their profession. No ^{proper} classifications (prior to 1816) existed and graduation from the institution depended more upon vacancies in the army, age and physical development of cadets, and fancied fitness to become officers, than upon any rigid test of attainments. Some, despite the law of 1812 requiring that they should go "through all the classes", became full-fledged officers in four months and others again not till they had been pupils for nearly six years. True, the wise regulations of the Academy, approved July 2, 1816 by Secretary Crawford, prescribed a regular course of four years instruction; but these salutary requirements seem to have been ^{practically} ~~entirely~~ ignored. The veteran (Jared) Mansfield* patiently taught Natural Philosophy from "Enfield; the still older (Andrew) Ellicott* rarely, except to a few head cadets, transcended the elementary Mathematics of "Hutton:" first volume and "Simpsons (Conic) Section"; (Claude) Crozet* had hardly commenced the introduction of Descriptive Geometry and Engineering as brought by him from the Polytechnique School of Paris where he had been educated; (Christian) Zoeller* gave some instruction in topographical and ^{fortifi-} ~~and use of (surveying instruments)~~ ~~line~~ Drawing; (Claudius) Berard* taught only ("Du oef's) Course of French"; the professorship of Geography, History and Ethics was unfilled and hence there was no instruction

in these branches; Chemistry, Mineralogy and Geology were untaught; a little sword Exercise by Pierre Thomas* was practiced and the entire instruction in Tactics, given by the commanding officer himself, was confined to Infantry Drills and Target Practice with artillery.

Notwithstanding the lack of good discipline and this pitiful condition of things, Major Thayer entered upon his Augean labors undismayed. Abstemious habit had given him vigorous health to endure excessive labor; an ardent nature intensified his zeal in the performance of duty; system and study taught him what to do and when and how to do it; his almost despotic will banished all opposition and brooked nothing that was not tributary to his success; and a vaulting ambition overcame all impediments in the path to his fame - which was to create a military educational institution worthy of a great people and unsurpassed in the nations of the old world.

*See Index

Draft by George W. Cullum*

(No date)

From letters in my possession I find that General Thayer asked to be relieved from the superintendency of the Mil. Acad. about January 28, 1833, and that his request was granted communicated in a letter of the Chief Engineer of Feb. 1, 1833 of which I have the original signed C. (harles) Gratiot*. I was almost positive that there was a letter also from Lewis Cass* Secretary of War, speaking in very flattering terms of Gen. Thayers administration of the Academy. This latter letter I copied from the letter book, which I (examined) _____ in your office, but have put it away so (carefully) somewhere that, after a two-weeks search, I cannot find it. Can you furnish me with another copy of it. At the same time, if _____ I would like copies of communications from the Secretary of War of July 10 & 26, 1832 & To Col. Thayer; Thayers letters of July 29, 1832 in protest; and a private letter to Gen. Gratiot (File Number 2001) dated Jany 19, 1833. Professor (William H. C.) B(artlett)* informed me that Gen. Gratiot wrote Thayer a private and also a public letter (both in file) relieving him _____

*See Index

Col. Thayer

Born June 9. 1785 at South Braintree, Mass. At 10 years went
N.H. and was the protege of Gen. (Benjamin Pierce)*
the father of Pres. Franklin Pierce*

1803 went to Dartmouth College & graduated 1807 when he
went to West Point graduating there in 1808 -

1808 Apt. Engr

1808 " " to Col. (Decius) Wadsworth*? at the Forti-
fications on Governors Island Boston Mass. building South &
West Batteries & old Fort Warren

1809-1810 at West Point as Instructor & Adjutant of the
Military Academy

1810 & 1811 - Constructing works (at Salem, Newburyport,
Gloucester, &c)

1812-15 See Register

*See Index

Draft of General Order from War Department

(No date)

War Department
Adjutant General's Office
Washington

General Orders

No.

Another star has set of that bright galaxy of distinguished Chiefs of Engineers of our armies of the War of 1812-15. (William) McRee*, (Eleazer) Wood*, (Charles) Gratiot* and (Joseph G.) Totten*, one by one, have gone to their ^{honored} ~~erent~~ graves and now we have to add a no less illustrious name, -- Bvt. Brig. Gen. Sylvanus Thayer died at South Braintree, Mass., on the _____ in his eightieth¹ year.

General Thayer was born in ~~South~~ Braintree, near Boston, Mass., June 9, 1785; was graduated at the Military Academy in 1808; and was immediately promoted to the Corps of Engineers in which he continued till June 1, 1863, when age and feeble health terminated his active career of more than half a century of unsurpassed usefulness and ~~eminent~~ faithful service. Called to the field in 1812; though yet a Lieutenant, he became the Chief Engineer of the Army on the Niagara frontier, commanded by Maj. Gen. (Henry) Dearborn*; the following year he was Chief Engineer on the Champlain line of operations under Maj. Gen. (Wade) Hampton*; and, in 1814, of the forces of Brig. Gen. Moses Porter* defending Norfolk, Va., where, for his "distinguished ^{was} and meritorious services", he was brevetted a Major. Scarce ~~had~~ the war with Great Britain terminated, when Major Thayer was ordered to accompany Commodore (Stephen) Decatur* on the expedition to Algiers, but the news of the return of Napoleon* from Elba changed his destination to Europe, in anticipation of participating in the grand military operations of the "Hundred Days". But his ardently cherished hopes were blasted, on reaching the ~~English~~ ^{Straits of Dover} shore, by the fatal tidings of Waterloo. However, he garnered up rich treasures of military knowledge in witnessing the great evolutions and stern discipline of the Allied Armies, and carefully studying the fortifications, governmental establishments, and military schools of France, thus laying the broad basis, in his expansive mind, of his coming conspicuous career. Upon his return home, in 1817, he was ordered to take command of the Military Academy, of which he continued the ~~transcendent~~ ^{peerless} Superintendent for sixteen years, creating from a rudimentary school a preeminent seminary of science, a monument of his own fame, a fostering mother to the Army, the cynosure of all educational institutions throughout the land, the pioneer in the construction of numberless great public works, and a priceless possession for the nation's honor and glory, attested in three great wars. Upon retiring from the Military Academy, Colonel Thayer was charged with the construction of the permanent fortifications of Boston Harbor, now near completion, and which will endure for ages as models of engineering skill.

General Thayer's administration of his public trusts was ever marked by inflexibility, efficiency, faithfulness, and economy. He was animated with an enthusiastic passion for the military profession; Emulous of reputation, he had no jealousies of others; his modesty was as noted as his high sense of honor; though reserved in manner he was ever a gracious courtly gentleman; and, while shrinking from controversy, he never hesitated to give utterance to his opinions, and forcibly to illustrate them with the varied erudition of his richly stored mind.

The inestimable worth and services of this veteran soldier and patriot are embalmed in the grateful memories of the élèves of the Military Academy, of which he is justly styled "the Father"; and on every battlefield his name will be entwined with the laurel encircling the brows of so many of its gallant and heroic graduates.

As a tribute to his memory the officers of the Corps of Engineers will wear the prescribed badge of mourning for thirty days, and at the Military Academy half hour guns will be fired from sunrise to sunset, and the national flag be displayed at half ^{staff} ~~mast~~, on the day after the reception of this order.

By Order of the Secretary of War:

¹This draft apparently was prepared several years prior to S.T.'s death.

*See Index