

620 Chestnut St.¹, Syracuse, N.Y.
October 6, 1878

Dear Father and Mother; -

It is Sunday again, and therefore I imagine that you expect a letter from me; but writing a letter is not nearly as pleasant as the alternative, a visit home. I am quite well and happy, considering that I was initiated into the Π. chapter of the Ψ.Υ. Fraternity² last Friday night., quite contrary to my expectations a week ago. The initiation was fine, but, of course, I cannot tell you about it. I think I shall not regret having joined it the society. College life moves along quite smoothly. Monday there was a general cane rush³ between the Sophomores and Freshman in which the former were defeated, failing to break our cane. For the next two days we brought up a cane, but they did not dare to try and break it, and now several of us, myself included, carry them to classes and chapel. I took Gene's⁴ cane up to the ball-grounds one afternoon and after all the other Freshman had gone, about five Sophs succeeded in breaking it. Gene was one of the ring-leaders; but any thing, to have the shadow of an opportunity of saying they had broken a Freshman cane, was acceptable to them. We played ball with the Sophs Friday and beat them. I played short stop in the Freshman nine.

The first part of the week I had a great deal of trouble with the toothache. I went to the dentist recommended by Ingalls⁵, had the temporary filling taken out.

I have had time to call on no one but Aunt Lucy,⁶ who was well and wished to see mother.

Remember me to Prof. Sornberger⁷ and all Cortland people. Write telling me about everything, (I wish you would send me the "Standard"⁸ after you are through with it) and sending me a small sum of money (I am hard up).

Yours with love,
Henry

Footnotes

-
1. 620 Chestnut Ave. (now S. Crouse Ave.) was a boarding house run by the Walter H. Ticknor family; the house stood at the northwest corner of Chestnut and Adams; HAD lived there the first term of his freshman year.
 2. The Pi Chapter of Psi Upsilon fraternity was organized at Syracuse University in 1875.
 3. [The Cane Rush](#) was first held in 1872; an account of this rush appears on pg. 12 of the October 14, 1878 issue of The Syracusan.
 4. [David Eugene Smith](#) (1860-1944) friend from Cortland, classmate and roommate of HAD, and son of Judge A. P. Smith who was HAD's future law partner. 'Gene' Smith became a mathematician and professor in the Teacher's College at Columbia University.
 5. Hiram G. Ingalls was a dentist in Cortland at this time, his son Mason B. Ingalls, the same age as HAD, was listed as a dentist as well in the 1880 census.

6. Lucy Barnum Withey (1820-1892), great aunt of HAD, lived at 626 Irving Ave., one block from HAD.
7. Professor Samuel John Sornberger, Class of 1878, teacher of English, Physics, Latin and History at State Normal School, Cortland, 1878-1881. Prof. Sornberger roomed with HAD's parents in Cortland.
8. The Cortland Standard newspaper.

620 Chestnut St,¹ Syracuse, N.Y.
November 3, 1878

Dear Father and Mother,

In the records of the week just past there is not much of very hard study. Tuesday and Wednesday this week are at any rate easy days for me. Prof. Hooper's² sickness freed us from a recitation in Greek, and Thursday we had a holiday! You see, we received the Chancellor so heartily that he had to do something in return. Except Saturday I have been out every evening in the week. Don't you think I getting fast? Monday I went and heard Gen. Garfield's³ speech, which was a fine one. Tuesday was the Senior Ex.,⁴ Wednesday was the Chancellor's reception,⁵ [I send you a description taken from one of the Syracuse papers, to read, if you have not seen one already. Please preserve it. I was a member of the Committee on Chinese lanterns and fire works, which caused me some work and much worry; but it came off all right at last] – "but to return to my subject", Thursday night I heard 'Bob Ingersoll'⁶ whom I do not wish to hear again, and Friday night I, of course, went to Ψ.Y.⁷

Please learn, if you can, whether Prof. Stowell⁸ received the "Syracusan".⁹ Tell Prof. Sornberger¹⁰ that the Δ.Y. society¹¹ is going to continue the University Herald¹² with larger pages than before, for only one dollar". Success to them!

You said, father, that if I needed more money to write for it. I am not in absolute want, yet still a slight remittance would make me feel easier.

I am not sure whether I shall come home next Saturday or not. I should like to.

But it is growing dark, I have just time to make Aunt Lucy¹³ a call. Therefore I will close. With kind regards to all Cortland people, the best of wishes to Prof. for himself, bird and "aquarium", and with much love to you both, I am,

Your son,
Henry A. Dickinson

Footnotes

-
1. 620 Chestnut Ave. (now S. Crouse Ave.) was a boarding house run by the Walter H. Ticknor family; the house stood at the northwest corner of Chestnut and Adams; HAD lived there the first term of his freshman year.
 2. George Heberton Hooper, Adjunct Professor of Modern Languages and Acting Professor of Greek 1878-1879
 3. James Abram Garfield, later 20th president of the United States, gave a speech concerned with finance.

4. [Senior Exhibition](#) of the Class of 1879 held October 29 in the university chapel offered music and readings.
5. [Chancellor Erastus Otis Haven](#) returned from a European trip and was escorted by the students from the train station to the University with a torchlight parade. Haven had sailed from New York on June 30, 1878.
6. Robert Green 'Bob' Ingersoll (1833-1899), "foremost orator and political speechmaker of late 19th century America", lectured on "Some Mistakes of Moses" at the Wieting Opera House, October 31, 1878.
7. Psi Upsilon, HAD's fraternity.
8. Thomas Blanchard Stowell, teacher at the Cortland Normal School, later head of the State Normal School at Potsdam and first dean of the School of Education at USC.
9. The first issue of The Syracusan, was published October 14 by three fraternities including HAD's Psi Upsilon.
10. Professor Samuel John Sornberger, Class of 1878, teacher of English, Physics, Latin and History at State Normal School, Cortland, 1878-1881. Prof. Sornberger roomed with HAD's parents in Cortland.
11. Delta Upsilon fraternity.
12. The University Herald, SU student newspaper predating the Daily Orange.
13. Lucy Barnum Withey (1820-1892), great aunt of HAD, lived at 626 Irving Ave., one block from HAD.

Syracuse, N.Y.
November 25, 1878

Dear Father and Mother; -

I will just go through the form of writing you a letter, for I shall be with you on Wednesday, doubtless. I am well and happy. Wednesday I had the old filling taken out of that tooth. And a temporary filling, put in by Dr. Palmer,¹ does not trouble me.

Thursday evening I was at a sociable at Chancellor Havens.² Had a pleasant time. Ψ.Y.³ was out in full force. Took the place by storm.

Gene⁴ and I are going to change our boarding house.⁵ Tallman⁶ (the fellow that you saw, mother) wants us to come over to his place on University Avenue.⁷ We get a pleasanter place at the same rates. We have come to the conclusion only after long deliberation. Will tell you all about it Wednesday. Have had no trouble here. Will move after the holidays. You must have again forgotten about that Cortland paper.

I have just written a long letter to Fred.⁸

Tell Prof. Sornberger⁹ that Sackett¹⁰ is back, dazzling the eyes, and kindling the admiration of the Δ.Y.¹¹ freshmen.

Excuse penmanship. Must hurry to get this into the mornings mail.

Your son,
Henry A. Dickinson

Footnotes

-
1. Dr. Stewart B. Palmer, Dentist.
 2. [Chancellor Erastus Otis Haven](#) lived at No. 5 Harlow Block on E. Genesee St., near University Ave.
 3. Psi Upsilon, HAD's fraternity.
 4. [David Eugene Smith](#) (1860-1944) friend from Cortland, classmate and roommate of HAD, and son of Judge A. P. Smith who was HAD's future law partner. 'Gene' Smith became a mathematician and professor in the Teacher's College at Columbia University.
 5. 620 Chestnut Ave. (now S. Crouse Ave.), boarding house run by the Walter H. Ticknor family; the house stood at the northwest corner of Chestnut and Adams.
 6. [John Francis Tallman](#) (1854-1918), Class of 1879.
 7. 15 University Ave., boarding house run by David L. and Mary E. Pike.
 8. Fred H. Wilkins, son of Andrew and Laura J. Wilkins, a friend, formerly from Cortland.

9. Professor Samuel John Sornberger, Class of 1878, teacher of English, Physics, Latin and History at State Normal School, Cortland, 1878-1881. Prof. Sornberger roomed with HAD's parents in Cortland.
10. [Martin Russell Sackett](#), Class of 1880, later principal of Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary, publisher of the Northern Tribune, and Consul to Prescott Canada; in the summer of 1878 he accidentally cut his knee so severely that it prevented his return to college in the fall.
11. Delta Upsilon fraternity.

Syracuse
December 15, 1878

Dear Father and Mother; - Wednesday or Thursday I will be with you. Examinations begin tomorrow, so we shall have an easy time this week. Of course we Freshman are somewhat anxious about our first college examinations; but I have concluded not to "cram". I am also going to take an examination in Physics, and see if can not pass up one Sophomore study.

To day I went down to the post-office and received my paper from Cortland which was welcome. The ten dollars from father of last week was just what I needed.

We have been very quiet here lately; only Friday after society meeting, I went to a sociable on James St., and stayed over night with Stevens.¹ Last night the $\Psi.Y.$ ² Sophomores and Freshmen were invited down to Chancellor Haven's.³ The two Prexies⁴ are very jolly hostes. It was one of the most pleasant evenings I have enjoyed since entering college. I have received a letter from Fred⁵ since writing to you. As I shall soon be home I'll save the rest of my talk till then.
With love,

Your son,
Henry -

Footnotes

1. William Jervis Stevens, Class of 1882, lived at 143 James St., Syracuse.
2. Psi Upsilon, HAD's fraternity.
3. The Haven family resided at No. 5 Harlow Block on E. Genesee St., near University Ave.
4. [Chancellor E. O. Haven](#) was referred to as "Prex," and his children known as Prexies; in the fall of 1878 two Haven children were attending SU – Mira was a junior and [Theodore](#) a sophomore.
5. Fred H. Wilkins, son of Andrew and Laura J. Wilkins, a friend, formerly from Cortland.