

15 University Ave.,¹ Syracuse
January 12, 1879

Dear Father and Mother;

Well here we all are, Gene,² Tallman,³ Tyler,⁴ Loomis,⁵ Welter,⁶ and I, at Pike's, our new boarding place. I suppose you wish to know how I like it and all about it. I like it very well, thus far. They are very pleasant people, and set a good and neat table. Just as you enter the hall you find a door at your right. Please come in. You enter Gene's and my parlor. You will have to acknowledge that it's a very fine room. How the boys stare when they call on us! Upon the floor is a very pretty Brussels carpet, the ground work of which is drab. It has a broad dark border which adds much to the "tone". In the front are two large windows with heavy gilt – what – do – you – call – them – mouldings? – garnet and gold (the Ψ.Y.⁷ colors) lambrequins, and white shades with fancy worked edges. Very fine! Between the windows is a looking glass about the size of the one in the sitting room at home, with gilt frames; below the glass is a marble-topped stand on which are our nicest books. Opposite the door is the mantle over which hangs a large engraving of Niagara Falls, and above that a picture of Smith's house. On the mantle is our clock, fancy thermometer, ink stand, paperweights, match box, Etc. and a couple of vases, and both Niagara Falls, mantle piece and looking glass are profusely decorated with pictures mostly photographs. In the corner on the same side as the mantle are our book racks. One like the one in Prof's⁸ room and another smaller one. In the back part of the room is the table at which we study and write. We are likewise better off for chairs than we were at Ticknor's⁹ - We have eight - Six sofa bottoms – three rocking , and one wooden armed chair. I wonder if you can see how it looks here. In addition I'll send a plan, perhaps, to help you.

Our sleeping room is at the head of the stairs. There is just room enough in it for for a bed, bureau and wash stand without crowding. We have four or five pictures on the wall and another gilt edged framed looking glass.

I think we are pretty comfortably situated. Tallman did not come till Wednesday Tyler till Tuesday, Loomis and Welter till last night. I was rather lonesome until the Freshmen came.

I passed in all my last terms work so that is all right. Only eleven terms more!¹⁰ Our work this term, it is said, is the hardest in the course; but we are not fairly to business yet. I called on Aunt Lucy¹¹ and found every thing as usual.

Saturday evening we went to see Barrett¹² who, you know, is one of the greatest of tragic actors. The play was not a very good one; but his acting was superb. Thursday I was also out in the evening. Was invited over to Prexie's.¹³

I have received a letter from Fred.¹⁴ He wants me to go and see him. I think I had better come home before a month. If I do not I shall need ten dollars more to carry me through. That is just as close as Gene figures and it is almost impossible to get any closer. Today I went to the first Presbyterian Church, and heard Dr. Millard.¹⁵ I think I'll go and call on Mrs. Rockwell¹⁶ tonight.

Love to you all –
Your affectionate son,
Henry A. Dickinson

I think I wont sent that “plan” tonight. By the way – I forgot to add that we have a chandelier and three extra pictures in the parlor.

Your son,
Henry -

Footnotes

1. 5 University Ave., boarding house run by David L. and Mary E. Pike.
2. [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.
3. [John Francis Tallman](#) (1854-1918), Class of 1879.
4. Lorenzo Dow Tyler, Class of 1882.
5. George Peck Loomis, Class of 1882.
6. [Joshua Lewis Welter](#) (1858-1937), Class of 1882.
7. Psi Upsilon, HAD's fraternity.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. In 1878-79 there were three academic terms: fall term September – December, winter term January – April, spring term April – June.
11. Lucy Barnum Withey (1820-1892), great aunt of HAD.
12. Lawrence Barrett (1838-1891)
13. Prexie was [Theodore Woodruff Haven](#), son of the Chancellor.
14. Fred H. Wilkins, son of Andrew and Laura J. Wilkins, a friend, formerly from Cortland.
15. Rev. Dr. Nelson Millard, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Syracuse 1872 to 1885.
16. Helen Rosette (Clark) Rockwell (1839-1930), widow of Edward Rockwell who was a first cousin to HAD’s father.

Syracuse, April 27, 1879

Dear Father and Mother -

I write to you today not because I have any thing to say; but as a matter of ceremony. I received the twenty dollars in two installments. It was very opportune. So Johannah¹ is making you a visit, is she? I should like to see her very much. Is she just as she always was? I hope mother will send me a letter this week. I inclose in this letter the shape of the book rests which he [Prof. S-²] wanted. It is taken from a bench in the chancellors lecture-room. I would have sent it sooner but the first impression taken was not correct; and I had to "try, try again". I have not seen Aunt Lucy³ in a long time. Aden⁴ had then enlisted, was in a hospital in St. Louis, and soon to return home. Today I went to Sunday school for the first time in the city. Morey⁵ and I went down. We went to the Park Church and into Mr. Thurber's⁶ Bible-class. I met Helen Rockwell⁷ on the way down. I see Irvie⁸ quite frequently in the street. I can not tell when I shall come home, but think 'twill be the week after this. We are now quite well. Kind regards to every one. With love,

Your son,
Henry -

Footnotes

1. The surname of the Dickinson's household help, Johannah, is not known.
2. 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.
3. Lucy Barnum Withey (1820-1892), great aunt of HAD.
4. Aden Withey, son of Lorenzo Merrill and Lucy (Barnum) Withey, was HAD's mother's first cousin.
5. Clayton Leonard Morey, attended SU 1878-9.
6. Rev. Edward G. Thurber, pastor of the Park Presbyterian Church.
7. Helen Rosette (Clark) Rockwell (1839-1930), widow of Edward Rockwell who was a first cousin to HAD's father.
8. Edward Irving Rockwell (1863-1955), son of Helen Rockwell above.

Syracuse, May 14, 1879

Dear Father and Mother -

It's too hot to write or do any thing else today; and has been the whole week. I did not write Sunday because you wanted me to find out and tell you about Aunt Lucy.¹ I have since lost all energy for anything. If a stranger should come into No. 15² now a' days they he would think it a sort of "sleeping palace"; though which one is the "sleeping beauty", I'll not venture to tell. Five young fellows, dressed in the simple and comfortable costume of wrapper, drawers, and stockings, languidly studying, listlessly talking, or tossing about in disturbed slumber, would uphold him in his decision. But we get up between five and six in the morning, and work hard upon our lessons for the day; and enjoy the pleasant mornings. Nevertheless in spite of old Sol.

The Freshman nine came out in their new suits yesterday and defeated a strong picked nine at base ball. The suits are white breeches with blue stockings. Tallman³ is back from convention and happy with two new suits of clothes.

I bought a Tai___ English Literature, a very interesting book and stand and work, for a dollar at Durston's⁴. He is frequently getting hold of some book and selling it at a very low figure, and some of the chances are too good to be lost. He has Motley's Dutch Republic in three volumes for \$4.80 now, but the capital involved is most too high for me.

I was at Aunt Lucy's night before last. Ella⁵ is now serving in Chittenango. She has engagements every day into July. They expect to stay where they are now another year; but are in hopes to get a good chance to trade it the place or sell it.

Miss Springer⁶ the beautiful, rich, and accomplished, is not boarding here any more. She was saucy etc., and Mrs. Pike⁷ sent her away.

I received the letter from Ida⁸ which you forwarded; but have had none from Mother this week. I hope Johanna⁹ does not work too hard this weather. Tell her the more I think of it the more I feel glad that she is coming to work for us for good.

With love to all of you, I am
Your son, Henry -

Footnotes

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1. Lucy Barnum Withey (1820-1892), great aunt of HAD.
 2. 15 University Ave., boarding house run by David L. and Mary E. Pike.
 3. [John Francis Tallman](#) (1854-1918), Class of 1879.
 4. Thomas W. Durston & Co., booksellers and stationers, 5 and 6 Remington Block

5. Ella Withey (1853-1948), daughter of Lorenzo Merrill and Lucy (Barnum) Withey, was HAD's mother's first cousin; married Frank J. G. Nitschke about 1885.
6. There was no "Miss Springer" listed in the 1878-9 Syracuse City Directory, but two unmarried females named Springer appear in the 1880 census, both domestics.
7. Mrs. Mary E. Pike – HAD's landlady.
8. Ida Ann Dickinson Hall (b. 1857), first cousin of HAD, later wife of Dr. William A. Hall
9. The surname of the Dickinson's household help, Johanna, is not known

Syracuse, N.Y., May 25, '79

Dear Father and Mother; -

You have not had a letter from me during one whole week. I have not had a pen in my hand since the last letter I sent you. To night I wrote to Ida.¹ When shall I have Fred² out home? Will Johannah³ be back so that it will be safe to ask him in July?

We have not been obliged to study very hard this week. Field-day⁴ was a holiday. It was quite a success, although not as elaborate as some have been. I send you a programme and also an account from the paper, if I can secure one. Please preserve.

I like my clothes very well for a business suit; but the buttons are coming off rapidly. Aunt Lucy⁵ sewed two on for me yesterday; and I myself was obliged to put two more on today, Sunday notwithstanding.

I told Gene⁶ to bring me up some shoes. My boots are too large to wear with cotton stockings. Already two corns have started on my toes.

How glad I am that Judge Smith⁷ came out all right! Gene was quite nervous, but now I presume, is very happy. It will look strange to see Mr. Hotchkiss's⁸ lot put into the Normal⁹ grounds. When do they begin the work? I saw Mrs. Sears¹⁰ Wednesday and she has probably seen Mother.

Let me know the exact day Johannah comes through Syracuse. I want to see her.

In four weeks I shall be home. Examinations begin soon.

With love to all I am
Your affectionate son,
H. A. Dickinson

Footnotes

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1. Ida Ann Dickinson Hall (b. 1857), first cousin of HAD, later husband of Dr. William A. Hall.
 2. Fred H. Wilkins, son of Andrew and Laura J. Wilkins, a friend, formerly from Cortland.
 3. The surname of the Dickinson's household help, Johannah, is not known
 4. For more information on the Field-Day Programme held May 23, 1879, see the 1878-9 The University Herald, pages [91](#), [101](#) and [102](#).
 5. Lucy Barnum Withey (1820-1892), great aunt of HAD.

6. [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.
7. Judge Abram P. Smith (1831-1897) of Cortland, HAD's law partner 1889-1897.
8. Possibly Samuel Hotchkiss who in 1870 was listed next to the Dickinson family in the Cortland census.
9. Cortland Normal School, now State University of New York College at Cortland.
10. A letter to HAD from his mother revealed that 'Mrs. Sears' was a Cortland resident who traveled to Syracuse every Wednesday to take a class at the University.

15 University Ave.,¹ Syracuse, N.Y.
Sunday, October 19, 1879

Dear Father and Mother; -

I postponed writing last Sunday until I might see Aunt Lucy;² and since, the lack of time to see her and the lack of time to write, combined, have deprived you of any word from me for a week. But as you have been equally silent no apology is necessary, I suppose. I have now been to see both Aunt Lucy and Helen Rockwell.³ Every one is well. Aden⁴ is working at his trade, and Ella⁵ is serving at a house on West Genesee St. I told Aunt Lucy about mothers letter that she did not write. Both wanted to know if you weren't coming up this fall. Aunt Lucy though father was a queer man not to come up here and see whether I behaved myself or not.

We have had our own big cane rush.⁶ I will send in this letter an account written by me and published in The "Courier."⁷ Please do not say anything about my writing for the "Courier". It is better to have the thing kept quiet. "What the Courier says" would mean more and have more influence and attention, probably, than "What Dick Dickinson says" It is also quite amusing to hear people criticize your work when they do not know you are the workman. Many asked me "Have you seen the Courier account of the rush? Read it by all means. It is the best" One young fellow was kind enough to tell me that it took more talent to write up one of those things than I would think. Etc. Etc. All of which is exceedingly flattering.

If pleasant I expect to come home Saturday by way of Ithaca. The Cornell Ψ .Y.s⁸ have invited the members of our chapter to visit them Friday, and Messenger⁹ has been urging me so hard that I think I will go, especially as I can make the expense slight. If I do, I shall bring Theo. Haven¹⁰ with me.

I heard Emma Abbott¹¹ in The Opera of Paul and Virginia.¹² It was very fine.

Is going on very pleasantly.

With love, Your son,
Henry A. Dickinson

Footnotes

1. 5 University Ave., boarding house run by David L. and Mary E. Pike.
2. Lucy Barnum Withey (1820-1892), great aunt of HAD.
3. Helen Rosette (Clark) Rockwell (1839-1930), widow of Edward Rockwell who was a first cousin to HAD's father.
4. Aden Withey, son of Lorenzo Merrill and Lucy (Barnum) Withey, was HAD's mother's first cousin.

5. Ella Withey (1853-1948), daughter of Lorenzo Merrill and Lucy (Barnum) Withey, was HAD's mother's first cousin; married Frank J. G. Nitschke about 1885.
6. The Sophomores were victorious in fending off the freshmen in the annual cane rush.
7. The Syracuse Courier, a daily morning newspaper.
8. Psi Upsilon, HAD's fraternity.
9. Hiram John Messenger (1855-1913), Cornell student from Cortland, Class of 1880.
10. [Theodore Woodruff Haven](#), son of the Chancellor.
11. Emma Abbott (1850-1891).
12. The opera "Paul and Virginia" by London composer William Reeve (1757-1815).

15 University Ave.,¹ Syracuse, N.Y.
Sunday Evening, Nov. 9, 1879.

Dear Father and Mother; -

I suppose I must write you a letter; but I have almost nothing to say. I have again settled down to my regular routine. The only evening I have been out since I was at home, was Thursday, when I accepted an invitation, as I supposed for a simple call, but in reality a party at Miss Hawley's,² the young lady that was at Dr. Hydes'³ this summer. I had a very pleasant time. Was the only University "man" there.

Just before supper this evening, I made Aunt Lucy⁴ a short visit. They are all well. Inquired about the Wheelers.⁵ If you know any thing about them tell me in your next letter so that I may be able to give some answer besides the regret usual "I do not know."

Ella⁶ is serving all the time. Comes home nights usually. They had a letter from Louise⁷ a day or two ago. She was well.

It is so warm tonight that I am almost good for nothing. I think I had better go to bed. Good night. Regards to all.

Your affectionate son,
Henry

Footnotes

1. 15 University Ave., boarding house run by David L. and Mary E. Pike.
2. Possibly Belle Hawley of Syracuse who attended the University 1879-80.
3. Probably Dr. Miles Goodyear Hyde (b. 1841), but possibly his father, Dr. Frederick Hyde (1809-1887), both physicians at Cortland.
4. Lucy Barnum Withey (1820-1892), great aunt of HAD.
5. The Wheeler family of Cortland (Elijah and Angeline) were relatives of HAD's great-uncle Lorenzo Merrill Withey; Mrs. Wheeler was Merrill's sister.
6. Ella Withey (1853-1948), daughter of Lorenzo Merrill and Lucy (Barnum) Withey, was HAD's mother's first cousin; married Frank J. G. Nitschke about 1885.
7. Louise Withey (1847-1914), daughter of Lorenzo Merrill and Lucy (Barnum) Withey, was HAD's mother's first cousin; married Charles Hyden about 1872.

15 University Ave.,¹ Syracuse, N.Y.
Sunday, December 14, 1879.

Dear Father and Mother;

This is the last Sunday of the term. Examinations begin Wednesday morning and close Friday. I may be home Friday night; but perhaps not until Saturday. I had to stay in the house two days of last week, as I had a sore throat but I have now completely recovered. Yesterday I received ten dollars from you. As I shall soon be at home there is no need of lengthening this epistle.
With love,

Your son,
Henry A. Dickinson

Monday – I received the other \$10.00 today.
H.A.D.

Footnotes

1. 15 University Ave., boarding house run by David L. and Mary E. Pike.