Much of the early history of frontier communities is irretrievably lost. This is the case of Kittanning, Pennsylvania, the seat of Armstrong County since 1800. Virtually no records of its first decades have survived, fire having consumed the courthouse and all official documents in 1858. Although a newspaper, the Western Eagle, was established in 1810, no copies of it are extant prior to the 1820s. A large percentage of the pioneer inhabitants were probably illiterate. Others did not have the time or inclination to record their thoughts and activities in diaries and journals or to correspond with friends and families in the east. Yet, there were educated businessmen, lawyers, clergymen, and physicians who undoubtedly did so, but whose records and letters have not been discovered. The county’s earliest and best historian, Robert Walter Smith, spent almost forty years gathering large quantities of original Kittanning sources, including newspapers, government documents, and correspondence. However, this valuable collection was inadvertently burned shortly after his death in 1881. The historian of Kittanning, therefore, is left with a few county, church, and genealogical studies which are not wholly reliable and largely ignore the early nineteenth century.

As a result of this dearth of information, the following letters take on added importance. Written from Kittanning in 1815 and 1816 by one of Armstrong County’s first doctors, Malthus A. Ward, they offer a revealing account of frontier medicine as practiced by a young, inexperienced physician who lacked necessary equipment and medicine. The letters also provide vivid insights into other aspects of
pioneer life. Especially significant are the critical comments about the crudeness of frontier society and many of its inhabitants, the minute descriptions of plant and animal life, and the detailed reports of commodity prices, currency fluctuations, and agricultural methods and yields. In contrast to the meager sources previously available, Ward’s letters provide a unique, firsthand account of early Kittanning and Armstrong County.

Born in Haverhill, New Hampshire, in 1794, Malthus A. Ward was educated at the local academy and at Middlebury College in Vermont. After completing a course of lectures at the Medical Institution at Dartmouth College in 1814, he returned to Haverhill to continue his training under Dr. Ezra Bartlett, to whom the letters are addressed.4 In the summer of 1815, Ward set out for the west in search of a location where he could establish a medical practice. Exhausted physically and financially and discouraged by the fact that all the towns through which he had passed in New York and Pennsylvania had a surplus of practitioners, he decided in late August to make a stand in Kittanning. Ward remained there until December 1816 and subsequently practiced in Pittsburgh and Hindostan, Indiana.5 He returned to New England and earned an M.D. degree at the Medical School of Maine in 1823. For most of the next decade, he was a prominent physician and civic leader in Salem, Massachusetts. He accepted a position as Professor of Natural History at the University of Georgia in 1831 and resided in Athens until his death in 1863.6 Although his stay in Kittanning was short, Ward in later years corresponded with friends there. Unfortunately these letters have not survived.7

Bartlett Papers, LC). Permission to publish has been granted by Alvis M. Duckworth, State Librarian, NHSL. The county historians simply list Ward as an early physician without any biographical data. Armstrong County, 1: 92; Smith, Armstrong County, 110.


6 General Catalogue of Bowdoin College and the Medical School of Maine, A Biographical Record of Alumni and Officers 1794-1950 (Brunswick, 1950), 438; Centennial Catalogue of the Trustees, Officers and Alumni of the University of Georgia, from 1785 to 1885 (Athens, 1885); “Death of Ward,” Southern Cultivator, 97.

7 Two of Ward’s letters are quoted by Smith, but they were apparently among those materials destroyed in 1881. Ward to Eben Smith Kelly, Jan. 18,
Hon’d. Sir.

... I delayed writing that I might be enabled better to inform you concerning the eligibleness of my situation and the grounds of my future expectations. ... Kittanning, the first place that gave the least encouragement is situated on the east bank of the Alleghany river, 120 miles south of Erie, 45 north of Pittsburg & 320 west of Philadelphia, in latitude about 41°N. But I must not now enter into particulars. I have determined to pass the winter here & shall have an opportunity of learning & describing the country to you & of receiving your advice whether I had better stay longer or look further. I have been here just one month & although there is another physician (truly a poor one) in the place, I find that notwithstanding my want of many necessary articles of medicine & medical apparatus (I have not yet so much as a mortar) I have taken in cash for small jobs as extract dent etc $5.68, and charged on book $37. My business is daily increasing. It is indeed wonderful how highly the "wee yankee Doctor" is esteemed. I fear nothing so much as their high expectations of his skill will be suddenly cut short & his real ignorance betrayed. I have scarcely an author to refer to & every day almost more & more perplexing cases. The only medical books I [have are] Thatcher’s dispensatory & Physicians Vade mecum. I find [my] notes of great service, but in surgery I am without aid, & I have now a very perplexing case of a finger which was bit in a quarrel almost off through the cavity of the 2nd joint. The ends of the ragged tendons & ligaments mortify almost as fast as I can cut them away. I fear the whole finger must go. About two weeks ago I amputated a finger close to the hand, even a part of the metacarpal bone. It healed very kindly. I shall send to Pittsburg for supplies shortly. I board in one of the most respectable families in town & have a room handsomely furnished at 2.50 pr week. It will cost me $10 to have my grate supplied with coal through the winter & when I get a horse, a dollar a week for him to be kept on hay. I think you need not fear but I shall discharge my debts in NH according to contract except perhaps those at Hanover. I want

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1817, Aug. 8, 1823, quoted in Smith, *Armstrong County*, 52, 188. Ward may have lived in Kelly’s home in Kittanning.

8 Dr. Josiah Stevenson was the other physician in Kittanning at that time. *Armstrong County*, 1: 82, 92; Smith, *Armstrong County*, 110.

nothing more than a capital to open a small druggist store here. There
is none nearer than Pittsburg, but fear exceedingly that somebody will
do it before I am able. I have but a small piece of paper left, & will fill
it in requesting you to write me soon to expel Ennui, Nostalgia, etc.
I have heard nothing from Hav11 since I left it. Please to inform my
mother of the receipt of this and of my welfare. I beg you will inform
me if you know where Mr Eastman is. I could discover no traces of
him on the road & from this place I wrote Dr True requesting infor-
mation. I have just received an answer. He gives no encouragement
to come into that country, says Mr E was at his house in Aug & left
it for Cincinnati, since which he has heard nothing of him, & considers
it doubtful whether he will settle in Ohio. I feel also anxious about Dr
Woodward.10 Give my best respects to Mrs Bartlett & love to every
member of your family. They are all near my heart. That the happiness
of tranquil content may be yours thro' life is the ardent prayer and
that you may never have cause to doubt his gratitude and high
esteem will be the most anxious endeavour of

Maltis A Ward11
Sept. 25th. Have nothing to add, except that my health was never
better.

Kittanning (Armstrong Co.) Penna.
27th Nov. 1815
Honoured Sir,

On the 24th Sept I addressed a line to you, intending to have
given a minute description of the country into which Providence has
thrown me, but I found I had only wasted my paper and fatigued
your patience by a dull narrative of my journey, hardly mentioning
those circumstances & subjects which probably would be most inter-
esting to you—the success, & future prospect of professional business
and pecuniary concerns. More than two months have elapsed without
receiving a return. A presumption (founded on my knowledge of

10 Samuel Eastman and Simon Woodward were students of Dr. Bartlett
who also left Haverhill in 1815 to find a stand. Eastman traveled to Ohio and
Kentucky and Woodward to Vermont and New Jersey. Dr. True had moved
from New Hampshire to Marietta, Ohio, and had invested in land there for his
old friend Dr. Bartlett. Samuel Eastman to Ezra Bartlett, Aug. 21, 1815, Mar.
22, 1816; Bartlett to Eastman, Sept. 22, 1815; Simon Woodward to Bartlett,
July 7, Nov. 18, 1815, Bartlett Papers, NHS.
11 At this time, Ward spelled his first name Maltis.
your forbearance & benevolence) that the delay is occasioned by the pressure of more important concerns, instead of displeasure or indifference, emboldens me again to address you. . . .

From Buffalo I proceeded by a very boisterous passage to Erie. This was formerly what the French name imports, Presquisle i.e. almost an isle, but now it is an isle entire the neck of peninsula having been cut across. The harbour is tolerably good but very difficult of access on account of rocks & sand bars. The direction of the channel is such that when the wind is fair to go up the lake it is hard to get out & when fair to go down it is hard to put in. Here lie the best part of Com. Perry's fleet, sunk for preservation. The village is up a very high & steep bank of considerable size, very compact & built mostly of hewn logs. It is said that in a fair day Long Point on the Canada side may be seen. I could not see it. Here is a blockhouse built by Genl Wayne near which he was buried. 14 miles south is Waterford on LaBeuf creek. A stave thrown in here may float without passing any falls (those of the Ohio excepted) to the W. Indies. In passing down this creek our skiff filled & all my baggage was completely soaked. There is excellent lands on French creek but they are unsettled. The title is said to be in dispute. Meadville is a large village but without beauty, very compact & the streets narrow. Here is a bank & a college incorporated, which will go into operation next summer. At Franklin we entered the Alleghany & descended about 60 miles. The appearance of the country the most uninviting imaginable, nothing to be seen but steep brown hills rising from the water covered with stinted oaks, once in 3 or 4 miles a little bottom with a cabin & cornfield, till within 8 or 10 miles of Kittanning. I pitched upon this place rather by chance & necessity than choice. I had made up my mind to go down at least to Cincinnati, but when I got here I was very tired of travelling & my cash almost exhausted, & as there was a small prospect of getting business I thought I would try, at least to prepare for further enterprise.

Were I to undertake a description of the country around I would say that it is very hilly but has no mountains. It is well watered by numerous creeks on which are excellent bottoms. The timber is principally white oak, chesnut, chesnut oak—a tree not found in NE, the leaf & bark resemble chesnut, the wood is dense & resembles red oak—shag bark & two other kinds of hickory, red oak, black oak, crab apple, sour gum or peperidge, boxwood, etc. There is also the white wood or tulipbearing poplar said to make the best canoes in the world, and the bark to equal the cinchona, and the cucumber tree,
the scaly deep red fruit of which resemble anything else as much as a
cucumber, is of a hot pungent bitter taste, resembling that of the cloves
of prickly ash & infused in whisky forms a common morning dram.
The most common shrub is the sassafras. On the bottoms are black
walnut, which grows very lofty, with a round top resembling elm.
The bark & leaf resemble white walnut or butternut. The wood is very
dark & heavy & has the singular property of shrinking as is commonly
believed ad infinitum, no kind of seasoning will stop it. It is this
property which renders it so admirable for gunstocks, the barrel being
always closely embraced. The nut is peculiar and highly esteemed.
There is plenty of butternut, sycamore elm etc. Beech birch and ash
are found but not plenty, neither the sugar maple in this immediate
vicinity. There is also bass wood, here called Linden, or linwood,
hornbeam, locust, & honey locust which has remarkably long triple
thorns, black cherry & wild plum. The papaw grows plentifully be-
tween this & Pittsburg. It has a very large leaf of a nauseous smell
& the wood the most brittle I ever saw. I have not seen any bearing
fruit, tho' they are said to be plenty. The laurel grows along the
borders of the river & creeks & is almost the only evergreen seen.
Pine & spruce are not found at all & only few hemlocks. Pine lumber
comes plentifully down the river. Senega & Virginia snake root are
very common in the woods. But the greatest riches of the country
should consist in the abundance of its stonecoal, iron ore and salt
water. Furnaces are erecting in a few places, salt works in many.
At crooked creek 16 miles from this they make about 40 bushels a day
& are extending their works. At Conemaugh they make upwards of
100. The coal here are so handy that the same shovel that digs them
from the bank throws them into the furnace. Salt sells from $2 to
$2.50 pr bushel. None has come down the river from Onondaga since
the erection of the Kanhawa works. The wild game are deer, racoons,
hedge ground hogs, squirrels etc. The opossum is also found in plenty.
There are also wild turkies partridges and quails. I have seen very
fine venison sold a[t] 2½ cts pr lb & a dozen rabbits for a dollar. The
waters of all this western country are poorly stocked with fish. There
is not a trout to be found. There are catfish & suckers, what is here
called salmon (the pike of Lake Champlain) & buffalo fish. I am not
sure that I have seen one of these last. If I have it resembles a huge
overgrown sucker, weighing from 5 to 15 lb. Flour is worth from 6
to 7 dols pr bbl, Corn & rye 50 cts & oats 30 cts per bushel, potatoes
25. The uplands, altho they may look poor are easily cleared and
raise great crops of wheat, & excellent grass, tho generally no pains
are taken to sow either clover or grass seed. The bottoms raise excellent corn, 50 bushels of yellow corn to the acre is not an uncommon crop, altho' they do not manure their fields, or scarcely their gardens. Powder is made in this country. Lead comes from the Missouri, Sugar, cotton & tobacco come up the Ohio & sell about as in Hav'il. Most other goods come from Phila. or Baltimore & are somewhat dearer. There is very little cloth manufactured at home. Brandy rum or malasses are seldom bought here. Whisky (not potatoe) gin, peach brandy & strong beer are the common stimulants. Cider is worth 3 dols a barrel at Pitt*, or 4 here, Beef 3 to 4 dols, Pork 5 dols. Cwt this year in consequence of the crop of acorns having been destroyed by locusts. This plague is said to prevail once in 14 yrs.

Having given this general sketch of the land I ought to describe its tenants. This is a very difficult & disagreeable task. Two thirds are Germans, of the remainder more than ½ are Irish. Speaking generally I would say the leading attributes of their character are, laziness, intemperance, ignorance, and knavery. They are the worst husbandmen I ever saw. Their language a curious jargon of Dutch, Irish & corrupt English with much vulgar profanity intermingled. As for religion, I must allow them the praise of not having hypocrisy enough to pretend to have any. They dress principally in rifle frocks curiously fringed & not inelegant. Many never had a straight bodied coat in their lives. They are extremely fond of hunting. A backwoodsman sets as much by his rifle as an Arabian does by his steed, some of them [are] elegant. A smooth barrel is seldom seen, and "shot gun" is a common expression of contempt for a poor rifle. Instead of going to the woods with an axe on his shoulder he may be seen 5 or 6 days every week attended by 2 or 3 ugly dogs, having

"------------ in hand old rifle gun,
With buskin'd moccasins and cap of fox,
Fring'd hunting shirt, long knife & tomahawk
Tied on — and pouch and horn at side etc"

The country is new, thinly settled and not very fast populating. Most emigrants from NE. go down the river. At present I cannot expect business to the amount of more than 5 or 600 dols pr An, & the society here is so disgusting that I would rather live in NE on a less sum. I think I shall return as soon as I am able. The winter here is about as long as it is there, but much milder. Altho' the snow falls sometimes 2 ft deep, yet we can have not much sleighing, it so soon melts from the sunny side of hills. We have had no snow yet &
the ground is not froze only a little in the morning, but I am told this is a rare season. From the situation of the country I think at some future day it will be rich & important. I know not but I ought to endeavour to establish myself permanently here, & if I had friends near perhaps I should be better contented. In the month of Oct I charged only 25 Dols. I was however gone a week to Pittsburg. This month I have charged only 35 yet. I have bought a little horse, very small but very handy, 6 yrs old and warranted sound, for which with the saddle & bridle I gave my watch & note payable in 6 months for 38 dols. The greatest distances to which I have been called are, on this side of the river N. 3 miles E. 16 M. S. 12 M. — on the other side N. 4 M. W. 6 M. & S. 16 M. I have now on my hands a deplorable case, a lad about 13 broke both his thighs. This should bring me in a good sum, but his father is poor & I shall hardly get much. However the boy is doing so well that it will increase my reputation. I am extremely fearful that I shall not be able to fulfil my contract with Capt M, not so much because I cannot raise the money as because I cannot get that kind which will answer. Almost all the bills circulating here are on banks in Ohio, & Virginia & Pennsylvania. West of the mountains, Specie is scarce and change is made in small bills of 6¼, 12½, 25, & 50 cents. Treasury notes have all been bought up by persons owing government for land. I shall however do my best, but if I fail, I can only assure him that I have not the least intention to defraud, but will eagerly seize the first opportunity that presents of recompening him to his complete satisfaction.

I continue to dispel the discouraging melancholy reflections which often beset me by anticipating the joy with which I shall visit my native soil, embrace my friends, and discharge my debts.

With regard to the sum I owe you, I hardly know in what terms to express myself. The money shall be paid. The debt of gratitude I have no wish should ever be discharged. I feel severely the want of capital and were I to begin the world anew, I would wait until I was fully prepared before I set out. I know you cautioned me to that effect, but I thought I was ready & losing time. The event proved me premature. I do not get paid promptly & can hardly get cash enough to furnish medicine. Board is also extravagantly high considering the price of provisions. I have written several times to Mr Eastman by

12 Captain Benjamin Merrill was a prominent merchant and banker in Haverhill from whom Ward had borrowed money apparently to finance his education. William F. Whitcher, History of the Town of Haverhill (New York, 1919), 591.
persons going down the river but have received no return. The influenza prevails here but the people believe it of no use to apply to a physician.

Compliments at the close of a letter have become so trite & follow so much as a mere matter of course as to lose all effect. The eye glances over them without attention as if they had no meaning. I would however beg to be understood as speaking from the heart in the widest and best sense of the words when I request you to present my respects to Mrs Bartlett & her sister, and my love to all your children maxima and minimum, and for yourself accept the fullest assurance of the high respect and esteem with which I have the honour to be

Yrs etc
Maltis A Ward.

Hon E Bartlett

PS. I have neglected to mention a circumstance of some importance. About 4 weeks since a Dr Spears from Petersham Mass. came to settle here. He is a man about 32 yrs old of very imposing exterior & apparently considerable capital, has seen much of the world, was with the patriot army in New Spain & also in Jackson’s army. A younger brother also a Dr came with him & settled at Freeport 15 miles below this. A young man named Smith was also with him as a student. Dr Stevenson, my antagonist combined with him to expel me from town. He even entered into partnership with him. Last week he borrowed a horse worth 90 dols to visit his brother. That brother had bought on credit a horse worth 80 dols & a new suit of clothes worth 40 dols & considerable other property. They left Freeport together ostensibly to go to Pittsburg for medicines, but have never been heard of! The next night after he left this Smith was detected stealing off with their trunks in a skiff. He is now in jail & probably will go to the Penitentiary. The Spears’ were pursued in vain. Dr Stevenson has continued to excuse himself from being responsible for any of their deeds. Thus I have got rid of what I dreaded as a formidable rival, but the character of Yankee has received a dreadful degradation.

Yrs
MAW.

Kittanning 12th August 1816.

Dear Sir

Although I have not been apprised whether or not you received
my last letter, yet I feel encouraged to trespass upon your patience with another, considering it a duty to render you an account of my circumstances and prospects, & believing from the kind concern which you have so frequently manifested for my welfare that such intelligence will not be entirely uninteresting. At all events I can trust your candour & forbearance will pardon my importunity and not ascribe it to any improper motive. With respect to myself I have very little to say, & that far from self commendation. I have been in this place almost a year and have done business to the amount of about $700. My board, horsekeeping, medicine & all incidental expenses perhaps 250, and I may allow 100 for bad debts. The times have been so hard that I have been able to collect very little money. Even our best farmers have been obligated to send all they could get out of the country for provisions and necessaries, but as crops have begun to come in I expect soon to receive so much at least as will relieve me from any immediate anxiety. You will doubtlessly think & perhaps with much truth that I might have chosen a much more eligible stand for accumulating property. I certainly wish most heartily to better my circumstances, but frankly confess, I do not know how. I am quite sure there is not a better situation within the compass of 60 miles of this, and I acknowledge that I have not courage to venture upon absolute uncertainty a much greater distance from home, for though I have no expectation of assistance from that quarter yet I cannot but feel a desire to be near my friends, and if you could see the length of wearisome road already between us you would admit that labour enough must be endured before we can meet again. Success in Ohio or Indiana would depend upon being at hand to seize the fortunate moment of occupying the place of some eminent practitioner just dead or removed from the country. I would as soon take my chance in New England. Private accounts from the west are very contradictory. Newspaper puffs are little to be depended upon, and published "extracts from letters of intelligent, candid, and uninterested gentlemen to their eastern friends" are well known to be the production of crafty landspeculators and others possessing large tracts in the vicinity of places which they eulogize. A friend & fellow student from Middlebury lately called upon me. He had taken a tour thro’ NY & the western part of this state in quest of a stand without success & was returning heartily dissatisfied to Vermont. At present I think I will stay where I am, until I can get some particular information & positive assurance of bettering myself. Here I am pretty sure of making a living tho’ not a fortune quickly. The climate, soil, & other particulars render this preferable to
NE. The country is improving and society refining, tho' perhaps not so rapidly at present as some other places. To leave this for a few months or even weeks would in my present circumstances be equivalent to a permanent abandonment. My place would certainly be occupied by another. I shall make you a visit as soon as I can with any degree of propriety, but when that time will be is quite uncertain. I wish very much to discharge my debts, but have learnt too well the risk of transporting money by mail, and even if there was no danger such is the state of the currency here that I could not possibly obtain any bills which would pass in NH. Western paper is 16 [?] percent below Philadelphia & that 10 or 20 below specie. I trust however that when the National Bank is put in operation this difficulty will be surmounted.

The season has been here as elsewhere remarkably cold which has been ascribed by some to the spots in the sun, and I think with no small appearance of reason, the opinion of many sage writers to the contrary notwithstanding. I can hardly conceive of any other local cause capable of producing so universal an effect. But you have seen this subject amply discussed in the public papers, both seriously and ludicrously. I will however just mention a cause of the latter kind which has not been noticed by writers. When the spot first began to attract attention, a waggish old gentleman in this neighborhood insisted that it was not only the shape of a terrapin but was in fact a real terrapin, and adduced in support of his theory the authority of a popular writer on Natural History who asserts that, "this reptile makes no provision for its future progeny but lays its eggs in the sun and leaves them to their fate."

The terrapin is common here and differs from the land tortoise of N.E. by having the belly part of the shell very large and a curiously constructed joint across it by which the animal can shut itself in with almost as much exactness as a clam or oyster. The soft shell'd tortoise is also common & is a curiosity. The upper part of the shell is very large & spreads much wider than the body, but on the belly is only a narrow strip across. The whole of the shell is as soft & flexible as a piece of wet leather of the same thickness. When cut into it appears like gristle but seems quite sensible and bleeds freely. It is composed principally of gelatine, is cooked with the rest and by long boiling is almost entirely dissolved making excellent soup. Small alligators are found in the river and are supposed absurdly enough to be the young of that formidable inhabitant of the Mississippi. The largest are about 18 inches long, have a head, eyes, mouth and skin like a bullpout & in my eye are the ugliest of creeping things. Yesterday I
saw a lizard climbing a tree. It was about a foot long, glossy black studded with small round white spots. Rattlesnakes and copperheads are said to be common. I have seen neither but have lately heard of several persons being bitten by them. The people think physicians can have no skill in this branch and never employ them. They resort to various Indian specifics which I think must have some efficacy for I never heard of a backwoodsman dying of a snake bite.

Fish are not plenty in these waters but are very large. They seldom angle for them but employ a night line. This consists of a strong cord of great length, one end of which is fastened to the shore, the other carried out into the channel and anchored. From this go off at intervals numerous lines 3 or 4 feet long with hooks baited with crawfish. This morning I saw one taken up which had on it 2 alligators, 2 soft shell’d and one snapping turtle, 2 bass of about 1 lb each, 1 eel 3 lbs, 1 catfish 16 lbs, 1 white perch 11 lbs & 1 sucker 7 lbs. This was reckoned one of the greatest “takes” ever made in this place. Perch sometimes weigh 30, catfish 40 & sturgeon 60 lbs, but such are very rare. There are many sort of fish here which I am not acquainted with but as I have not seen them cannot describe them.

Travellers agree in saying that the appearance of crops is much better in this county than in any of the surrounding country, but is everywhere 2 or 3 weeks later than usual. Wheat & Rye are now principally harvested, & have turned out far beyond expectation. Some fields of wheat have yielded 23, 4 & 5 bushels to the acre. The heads are generally very long and well fill’d. A farmer told me today that he usually allowed from 15 to 18 sheaves to the bushel, but yesterday out of 55 sheaves he thrashed 4 bushels & 3 pecks of excellent wheat.

Corn looks well but is backward. If the fall frosts keep off till late the crop will be good. We just begin to have roasting ears. The kind most esteemed is called “yellow gourd seed.” I have seen an experiment made with this which I should like to know would succeed with NE. corn. A hollow cone exactly of the shape & size of the ear is made by wrapping paper around it with twine. The ear is taken out, shell’d & the cob thrown away, the kernels put into the paper cone, and exactly fill it.

I think our Germans excel the Yankees in the culture of small grain, but fall short in that of corn, grass & almost everything else. A NE. farmer travelling here is struck on the first view of a farm with the great disproportion in the quantity of land devoted to the raising of grain and of hay. He will see 50 or 60 acres in grain to 8 or 10 in grass, and cleared land is seldom used for pasture unless it lays
fallow. Young cattle & indeed all others run in the woods & in the winter take up with cornstalks, straw etc with very little hay. Horses are fed principally on oats, or cut straw mixed with rye meal. Every farmer has a machine for cutting straw but I have seen but one winnowing mill in the country, which I think very strange. It would make a Yankee stare to see a traveller alight at an inn & order half a bushel of oats for his horse, but I see it frequently.

The axes, hoes, rakes etc used here are generally smaller than yours. Scythes are almost all German, very short but very wide and thin. They are all imported and of very fine steel of a peculiar temper. They are never ground but sharpened with a hammer. They occasionally rub them with a long stone which they carry in a horn full of vinegar tied to their belt. The handle or snath is nearly straight about 4 feet long. A Dutchman thinks it a great days work to mow an acre of middling grass, but he cuts it very close and smooth.

When the farmers thought their corn likely to fail they made great exertion to sow buck wheat. I know some fields of 12 & 15 acres. This crop is pretty sure & sometimes yields 40 or 45 bushels to the acre. Potatoes are very good, so that we are under little apprehension of a famine next year. The crop of mast is also promising, particularly chesnuts. Fruit is nearly all destroyed but [there will] be a few peaches & some apples. Strawberries and blackberries are not very [unintelligible] here. Red raspberries are not at all. There will be plenty of wild plums [which] are very delicious, resembling the white wheat plum. I have not seen a whortleberry this year but believe they are found in the country.

I would not urge you to write to me. I know your time is devoted to higher employments, and business of much greater importance demands your attention. Yet I most ardently wish to be held sometimes in remembrance. I would not be forgotten. I will venture to allude to the pleasure and gratitude which a letter from you would inspire. I am frequently sad, my friends are negligent in writing & I sometimes fancy myself in the predicament of old St. Nick, forsaken by God, forgotten by man, and buffeted by the Devil. I am truly a stranger in a strange land surrounded by sharpers & obliged to watch my best friends with a suspicious eye. I have heard nothing from Eastman since spring and the last news of Woodward was in your letter. I wish very much to know the best treatment for the salt rheum, or St Anthony's fire in the face.\textsuperscript{13} I can learn but little on that subject in books. My health is ex-

\textsuperscript{13} Inflammation of the skin. J. Thomas, \textit{A Comprehensive Medical Dictionary} (Philadelphia, 1874), 190.
cellent & that of the people generally such as to afford me but little business lately. I have generally been pretty fortunate in practice & think I enjoy the confidence of much the best portion of the inhabitants.

Accept Sir my best wishes. Present my compliments to your lady & family and believe me most respectfully

Your humble servant
Maltis A. Ward.

Pray excuse me for enclosing this note to my Sister.