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Board of Trustees

Trustees

Matthias L. Dunlap Papers, 1839-58, 1867-77

Box 1:

Letterbook, April 9, 1851-July 30, 1852, containing correspondence from R. Dunlap, secretary of Western Plank Road Company, concerning purchases relating to Western Plank Road Company, sale of saw mill at Leyden, financial records and the official actions of the Board of Directors.

Letterbook, March 23, 1851-Dec. 31, 1851:

To Ezra Corsi, seven letters,--general newsletters relating to family affairs, Farm and Plank Road business. Relates that M. L. D. and brother Robert Dunlap plan to build 14 miles to Plank Road that season.

To E. Dunkler, 3 letters, relating to company business, chiefly the movement of logs by river to be sawed for the Plank Road. Dunkler was a contractor engaged in providing planks.

To Robert Easton, 2 letters. Easton furnished logs for the Plank Road Co.

To S. E. Higginson, 17 letters all relating to the progress in the construction of the plank road including the sawing of logs, rights of way, problems with employees. Higginson was an official or important investor in the Plank Road Company.

To Benjamin Hodges, 3 letters, relating to both nursery and plank road affairs. One of the entries is a note showing that Hodges was Dunlap's creditor.

To E. Hills, 3 letters. Hills seems to have been one of the directors of the Plank Road Co. and the letters relate to Company business.

To C. H. McCormick, 2 brief letters.

To the Post Office Department, 8 letters. Dunlap was at this time the Leyden postmaster. The letters are to the auditor of the Department and include receipts and letters relating to contracts for mail delivery. Some letters also relate to Dunlap's predecessor as postmaster.

To the Prairie Farmer, 1 letter, discussing the blight which has struck his apple trees.

To Messrs. Wheeler Milick and Co., four letter. Dunlap seems to have been an agent for this company engaged in selling their winnowers. The letters include receipts and details of business transactions, a report that sales have been good, but a warning that dangerous competition may result from a similar machine soon to be manufactured in Chicago.

To Jacob Wilson, four letters. Wilson was supplier of seeds for apple trees. Residing in Pulaski, N. Y.

Letterbook, January 12, 1852-April 21, 1853

To the Prairie Farmer, concerning Pitts corn and cob mill run by a Wheeler's Railway Two Horsepower Engine used for grinding corn for feed, January 12, 1852

To Hiram A. Pitts, testifying to Dunlap's success in using the Pitts corn and cob mill, January 12, 1852

To Jacob Smith of Lockport, IL, mentioning Dunlap's activities as Secretary of the Plank Road Co. and planting of sweet potatoes, January 14, 1852

- To Noze and Co., Chicago, IL, concerning the contracts between the Western Plank Road Co. and J. B. Phillips for the sawing of logs. State the Company's dissatisfaction with Phillips. Noze and Co. owned a saw and grist mill, January 20, 1852
- To Hiram Pierce, New Jersey, a letter written to his brother and sister. Gives news of friends. Reports that he has given up his other business and concentrates now on his farm and nursery. Says that a plank road now connects Leyden with Chicago, February 1, 1852
- To S. Buck and the Commissioner of Highways of the town of Proviso--Correction of a surveyor's report concerning a road which would run through Proviso, February 12, 1852
- Certification of a survey of a road located in the town of Addison in DuPage County, February 14, 1852
- To William Jackson--Reports that he is giving up most of his public business to concentrate on his farm. Remains postmaster and town treasurer, February 11, 1852
- To A. A. Bing--Notes that his town has been named Leyden. Speaks of the improvements in living conditions in Chicago. Plank road is now extended 19 1/2 miles from Chicago to Salt creek some mile from Des Plaines. Effect of the plank road on farming, February 24, 1852
- To A. Biercroft--Recommending the Pits corn and cob mill, March 4
- To W. Woughhop concerning business of the Plank Road Company and the new board of trustees, March 4
- To Hon. R. S. Malony, Washington, DC concerning Democratic party politics and gives a list of German residents who can read English and are potential voters, March 4
- To the Board of Supervisors of Cook County giving details of a farm Dunlap was delegated to choose for the paupers of Cook County, March 8
- To Matthias Lorn, Dunlap's uncle and aunt, giving family news. Says outlook for the farm business is good with money becoming more abundant and prices for produce rising, March 7
- To G. H. Rugg of Ottawa, IL, congratulating him on obtaining a patent for carved rings fingers on his reaper, March 8
- To J. A. Larn--discusses the transport of mail from Chicago to Elgin via Leyden by means of the Plank Road, March 9
- To Prairie Farmer--gives details of the trial of grass cutters held at the Fair of the Mechanic Institute of the City of Chicago. Participants were C. H. McCormick of Chicago, G. H. Rugg of Ottawa, and Danforth of Karn County. Discusses strong points and defects of each machine and seems to favor that of G. H. Rugg, March 12
- To The Tribune, giving the news of a tornado which passed through Addison, IL on March 13 killing one person, injuring several others and causing considerable damage, March 14
- To A. E. Baker, Lorrian, N. J.,--relates that he has suffered losses on stock in the Plank Road Company. Due to competition from the railroad the stock has fallen to 50 cents on the dollar. Also writes about his experiences on the Board of Supervisors, March 21

- To Miss Harriet Garlock, a cousin, concerning the prospects for a teaching position in Chicago or in Leyden, March 21
- To Benjamin Hodges concerning the orchard and nursery business and plans for expansion which were blocked by losses incurred in the Plank Road Co. stock, April 15
- To the Commissioners of highways of the town of Addison--a petition to open a road between Addison in DuPage County and Leyden, April 15, 1852
- To J. D. Hustid of Chicago--gives a list to trees that Dunlap is sending him, April 15
- To C. H. McCormick congratulating him on improvements in his grass cutter and evaluating McCormick's cutter in relation to Danforth's, April 16
- To R. Dunlap, brother in Washington, DC, discussing the problem of getting a bank loan, April 25
- To J. M. Higginson concerning the movement of logs to a saw mill to be made into planks, April 29
- To H. L. Jefferson proposing to sell him logs belonging to the Western Plank Road Co., Jefferson owned a saw mill, April 30
- To Miss Diana Strickland--offers to engage her to do housework for \$1.50 per week, May 3
- To Miss Kate Pierse--gives a list of plants that Dunlap is sending her, May 5
- To A. E. Corsi, his nephew, encouraging him to pursue his plan "To climb the 'hill of science'". Argues that dead languages such as Latin and Greek are useless studies except for a teacher. Believes that modern languages and the study of science are useful, May 6
- To Harriet Garlock--gives more details on working conditions for teachers in Chicago schools, May 6
- To A. A. Berry giving details of the carrying of mail between Chicago and Leyden. May 12
- Lists of fruits in orchard at cottage farm, ca. May 12
- To G. H. Rugg stating that he has decided to take one of his machines at \$130. Hopes to place one or two more of his machines in the county. Says McCormick has offered one of his machines at a small price, May 17
- To C. Biefs of Chicago--reports that he has purchased a reaper made by G. H. Rupp for \$120 with two sickles. This is \$30 cheaper than the McCormick Reaper, May 25
- To A. E. Corsi, his nephew, more on his ideas about education. Dunlap writes that he has had little formal education, most of his schooling was "upon the theater of active live"., May 26
- To R. Dunlap, brother, concerning the prospects for the sale of the road in which they have invested and the possible relief of their financial problems, June 6
- To G. H. Rugg defending himself against an attack by McCormick in the Prairie Farmer. Advises Rugg to have his machinery in as perfect condition as possible in order to protect his reputation, June 8
- To C. H. Webb of New York--a good description of living conditions in the Leyden area. Dunlap describes it generally as a healthy spot with abundant water and good plank

road to Chicago, June 21

- To R. Dunlap concerning prospects for completion of the Plank Road and difficulties with one of the employees of the Plank Road Co. named Judson, June 21
- To R. Dunlap complaining that the road has not been sold and that it probable will not be sold. Delays in the completion of the road, June 30
- To John A. Thompson of Chicago requesting that an investigation be conducted on charges that a piece of mail had been tampered with, July 2
- To G. H. Rugg stating that he is confident that the machines will sell well if they perform as well as he expects. Mentions the shop cost price as \$130
- To Benjamin Hodges concerning the purchase of land. Also states intention of completing the plank road to the west side of Salt Creek and is using all of his horses to work on it. Does not believe the road will be sold, July 5
- To James A. Jones relating news of his brother's journey to California, July 7
- To R. Dunlap stating that the last plank is now ready to be laid in the road and that the grading is almost complete, July 8
- To R. Dunlap--thinks of selling out and going to either Belvidere or Rockford to open up a large nursery, October 11
- To G. H. Rugg stating that he hopes to sell several of Rugg's machines in the spring and that he hope Rugg has so perfected the machine as to make it strong and durable, November 5
- To Benjamin Hodges discussing the factors involved in choosing a new place for settlement including proximity to water, timber and the railroad. Speculators had most of the choice lands along the railroads. New railroads over the prairie including the proposed Chicago-St. Louis line hold possibilities for the future. In the dry season just passed tolls from the plank road were low--about \$20 a month, November 8
- To G. H. Rugg giving details in the sale of machinery and suggestion for improvements in the design of the sickles, January 23, 1853
- Cultivation of Apple Seedlings--article, (March, Prairie Farmer), February 9, 1853
- To Harriet Garlock--notes that he has a great correspondence to deal with. Writes about fifty letters a month: "I make examinations of lands, pay taxes and draw bonds, mortgages, agreements, deeds and almost every aspect of legal writing," February 9, 1853

Letterbook, April 21, 1853-August 1, 1855:

- To A. A. Berry, 13 letters--general letters giving news of the family, the nursery and property values. Dunlap was looking after the rental of some property owned by Berry in Cook County. Dunlap mentions in December 1854, his departure to serve in the state legislature. On July 16, 1855 he tells of his plans to move to Urbana.
- To A. E. Baker, uncle, 7 letters. Gives general news of family and nursery. Reports that he is writing for Chicago Democratic Press, farm and garden articles under the name of "Rural". These articles are circulated in other papers in the state.
- To J. J. Blois, 14 letters. These letters relate to the nursery business. Blois was a fellow nurseryman living in Michigan and supplied Dunlap with seeds. He was also

- secretary of the Nurseryman's Convention meeting at Actnan, Michigan in the winter of 1854. Dunlap was unable to attend but wrote Blois as essay on root grafting to present at the convention, letter of February 24, 1854
- To H. B. Corsi, nephew, 11 letters, concerning general family news.
- To R. L. Dunlap, 3 letters. That of May 8, 1853 discussed the sale of the Plank Road.
- To the Democratic Press, 7 "Farm and Garden" articles, concerning such topics as preservation of trees, seed corn, progress and orchards.
- To E. B. and F. B. Drake of Janesville, Wisconsin, 12 letters, all relating to the nursery business. The Drakes were large purchasers of seedlings at this time.
- To Lewis Ellsworth, of Naperville, IL, 9 letters. Ellsworth seems to have been a fellow nurseryman and the letters concern the nursery business.
- To Harriet Garlock, 11 letters, several family news, thought on religion, education, married life.
- To Col. Benjamin Hodges, 5 letters, relating to family news and nursery business. Dunlap tells of losses as a result of the Plank Road stock.
- To Charles Hamilton of Greenwood, IL, 10 letters. Greenwood was a nurseryman. Dunlap's letters consist primarily of advice relative to the growing of fruit trees. This advice is given in considerable detail.
- To J. D. Jones, 6 letters, primarily concerning land dealing in Cook County. On June 29, 1853, Dunlap predicts that the Plank Road will greatly increase the value of land and prosperity of the farmers located along it.
- To Issac Pullen, 7 letters, concerning maple trees which Pullen furnished Dunlap's success in growing them.
- To Wm. M. Plant and Co., St. Louis, 6 letters. Correspondence relating to Dunlap's sale of seeds to this company.
- To G. H. Rugg, 33 letters, some of which relate to the nursery business and others to the sale of Rugg's reapers. Dunlap writes on prospects for sales, collection of payments for the machines, and suggested corrections of defects in the machines, particularly the sickles. He concludes that there is so little grain grown in his area that chances of selling so large a machine as Rugg's are not good.
- To A. L. Small, 19 letters--extensive correspondence on the nursery business including business transactions between Small and Dunlap, Dunlap's advice on Nursery matters.
- To Thorp Smith Hanchet and Co., 23 letters. This company of Syracuse, N.Y., was an important supplier of fruit trees and seeds for Dunlap's nursery. The correspondence relates to Dunlap's orders and general prospects for orchards and nurseries in Illinois.
- To Jacob Wilson of Pulaski, N.Y., 22 letters, relating to Dunlap's orders of seeds from Wilson.
- To Messrs. Wheeler Miliek and Co. of Albany, N.Y., 5 letters, concerning Dunlap's success in selling their winnowers.

Letterbook, August 14, 1855-January 1858. The letters in this book are primarily from 1855 and 1856. Additional months represented are January, February, April, May, and October of 1857 and January of 1858.

To A. E. Baker, his uncle, 4 letters. Give family and farm business news. Finds the climate and crops in the Urbana area superior to those around the lake. Refers to his experience as a state legislator and his contacts with Chicago bankers and Plank Road men. Writes that he is a member of the American party, and a Democrat of the Jefferson school, not a Douglas Democrat.

To A. A. Berry, 4 letters, Relates news of nursery business, gives a description of Urbana and the new village of West Urbana. Dunlap was selling some property for Berry and wrote that cheap Iowa lands were making it difficult to get a good price in Illinois.

To J. F. Colby of Onarga, IL, 8 letters. Letters relate to Colby's work as Dunlap's agent at Onarga for sale and distribution of trees, Dunlap's advice on the nursery and orchard business, and farm matters.

To Robert Dunlap, M. D., of Wisconsin, 1 letter, May 27, 1856, discussing his place at Urbana of 240 acres on which there is a house and 13 acres of nursery and where he works 3 hands and 2 teams.

To Lewis Ellsworth, 8 letters, relating primarily to the nursery business. In a letter of August 27, 1855, states his reason for moving to Urbana to be because of the railroad. There was no hope of a railroad passing through Leyden and Dunlap found it much more convenient and quicker to travel from Urbana to Chicago than from Leyden in Cook County.

To J. D. Husted, 7 letters, relating to business transactions and the prospects for settlement in Urbana. Dunlap's letter of August 18, 1855, in particular, discusses the advantages of Urbana.

To Col. Benjamin Hodges, 7 letters, Concerning location of lands for Hodges' soldier's warrant, Urbana, reasons for moving from Leyden, general business transactions. Says that the Plank Road will not be kept up in good repair.

To the Land Office in Springfield, 3 letters, concerning details of Dunlap's legislation certificate Dunlap received his land at Leyden by means of a soldier's warrant.

To G. H. Rugg, 2 letters, dealing with supply of trees to Rugg. Dunlap does not seem to have been handling Rugg's machines in this period.

To James Smith of Des Moines, Iowa, 9 letters, concerning trees and seed which Dunlap is selling him and advice concerning the planting of the trees.

To George Stevens of Belvidere, IL, 21 letters, all relating to nursery business transactions. Stevens seems to have been an important customer.

To Thorp Smith Hanchet and Co., of Syracuse, N.Y., 17 letters. This company was a supplier of fruit trees. Correspondence relates to order for fruit trees and the N. Western Fruit Growers Association request for displays. Dunlap also transacted some business for the company relating to a delinquent account of an N. Hotchkiss of Belvidere.

To Henry Whitman of Kankakee, IL 4 letters. Whitman agreed to become Dunlap's agent at Kankakee.

To Wheeler Milick and Co. of Albany, N.Y., 7 letters, relating to the sale of their machines. Dunlap writes that he hopes to sell some of their machines in the Albany area.

To Jacob Willson, 15 letters. These letters relate to seeds for fruit trees ordered from Willson by Dunlap.

To the Wisconsin Farmer, 2 letters, relating to subscriptions. Dunlap notes that he write the Farm and Garden articles for the Chicago Democratic Press and offers to exchange them for their weekly.

Ledger and Account Book, Leyden, 1839-1847, showing date, number, source or payee, items and amounts of receipts and expenditures. Contains a record of fruit tree plantings

Farm Journal "F", Champaign-Savoy, 1873-1877, showing date, number, source or payee, items and amounts credited and debited.

Journal "G" (1877-81) is in record series 26/20/13

### Box 3:

#### News clippings

September 1853-September 1858. Consists primarily of "Farm and Garden" articles taken from several Illinois papers including the Belvidere Standard and Urbana Union. These articles written for the Chicago Democratic Press were reprinted for a number of downstate Illinois papers. A number of the articles are concerned with trials of reapers. The articles signed "Rural" also include references to Dunlap's experience in the State legislature in 1855. Some clippings in 1856 relate to Dunlap's participation in "Know Nothing" politics. The volume also includes nursery records for the period 1848-1850 and copies of poetry.

1868-69. The clippings are primarily "Farm and Garden" articles. Other articles relate to Dunlap's attacks on the alleged emphasis on classical studies at I. I. U. These include Dunlap's "Agricultural Colleges a Failure", March 2, 1869, and other articles dated March 17, 1869, March 9, 1869, and November 2, 1869. The Clippings are pasted in a farm journal for the period 1851-1858, which includes records of nursery stock and tree grafts.

August 1869-May 1872. The clippings are primarily those of Dunlap's "Farm and Garden" articles under the signature of "Rural". Other clippings relate to Dunlap's attack on the emphasis on classical education at I. I. U. These include Dunlap's letter to the Chicago Weekly Tribune, reprinted February 2, 1870; a defense of the University signed by "A Professor", in the chicago Weekly Tribune for February 2, 1870; and a letter to the Tribune on April 10, 1871, signed by "Rural", attacking Gregory's discontinuance of the Veterinary Department of I. I. U. These clippings are pasted over the pages of farm journal for January 1867-April 1870.