

## **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Archives and Special Collections**

### **Stephen Van Rensselaer III (1764-1839). Collection, 1765-1839.**

**Accession #:** MC 27

**Quantity:** .25 linear ft.

**Access:** Open

#### **Biographical Note:**

Fifth in direct descent from Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, the first Patroon, Stephen Van Rensselaer inherited a vast landed estate in Rensselaer and Albany counties at the age of five.

He graduated from Harvard in 1782 and spent time in New York state government and as a member of the U.S. Congress (1822-29). His chief services to New York, however, were economic and educational. He was a member of the Erie Canal commissions and president of the state's first board of agriculture. He was the landlord for 3,000 tenants on Rensselaerswyck, his nearly 1,200 square mile estate and the founder and supporter of a wide variety of social, educational, business, and governmental institutions. In 1783 he married Margarita Schuyler, the daughter of General Philip Schuyler. Following her death in 1801 he married Cornelia Paterson, daughter of former New Jersey Governor William Paterson.

In 1824 it was Van Rensselaer's vision and support that enabled Amos Eaton to establish the Rensselaer School "for the purpose of instructing persons, who may choose to apply themselves, in the application of science to the common purposes of life."

#### **Content Note:**

The collection (approximately 45 items) contains correspondence and financial records documenting Stephen Van Rensselaer's political, military, social, and business activities, including the probate of his estate, from 1765 to 1839. Correspondents of note include Henry Dearborn, Philip Schuyler, Dewitt Clinton, and Eliphalet Nott.

Box Folder

**Correspondence**

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | 1  | Letter from I.H. Bronson, February 1829  |
|   | 2  | Letter from Lewis Cass, August 1836  |
|   | 3  | Letter from Governor Dewitt Clinton, 1820  |
|   | 4  | Letter to Major General Henry Dearborn, September 1812   |
|   | 5  | Letter to John Dickenson, October 1832   |
|   | 6  | Letters to G.W. Featherstonehaugh<br>December 1823<br>March 1825<br>April 1828<br>January 1829 |
|   | 7  | Letter to Ebenezer Foote, March 1795   |
|   | 8  | Letters to Henry Glen<br>January 1797<br>February 1801   |
|   | 9  | Letters to Nicholas Low<br>August 1803<br>October 1804<br>December 1825                        |
|   | 10 | Letter to J.W. Moulton, January 1820   |
|   | 11 | Letter to Eliphalet Nott, September 1839   |
|   | 12 | Letter to David Parish, March 1812   |
|   | 13 | Letters to Captain Partridge<br>June 1825<br>November 1826                                     |
|   | 14 | Letter to William Price, March 1828  |
|   | 15 | Letters from Philip Schuyler<br>September 1785<br>December 1801                                |
|   | 16 | Letter to unknown recipient, September 1829  |
|   | 17 | Letter to S. Watson, December 1795   |
|   | 18 | Letter from P. Wilson, 1804  |

**Financial, Legal, and Miscellaneous Records**

- |  |    |  |
|--|----|--|
|  | 19 | Accounts received, November 1838   |
|  | 20 | Albany Gazette announcement, nomination for Governor, 1813                         |
|  | 21 | Certificate, Honorary Member of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, July 1831 |
|  | 22 | Land receipt from George Severson, 1833  |
|  | 23 | Wax seals, 1806 and undated  |
|  | 24 | Psalm Book, 1765   |

- 2 Inventory of the personal property and effects of Stephen Van Rensselaer, 1839 (1 volume original in drop spine box); microfilm copy (positive and negative) 1 roll each

Folio

**Oversize Documents**

- 1 Deed to land in the Town of Greenbush, 1805
- Indentures between Thomas W. and Eleanor Beebe and Nicholas Beebe, 1828, 1837
- Indenture between Edward and Frances Holland and Edmond Matthews, 1752
- Indenture between Nicholas Low and Nathan W(?), and James Comstock, 1811
- Indenture between Stephen Van Rensselaer IV and Nicholas Beebe, 1851 (2 documents)
- Indenture between Stephen Van Rensselaer and Hendrick and Ratcliffe Reimer, 1791
- Indenture between Stephen Van Rensselaer and Elisha Reynolds, 1792
- Indenture between Stephen Van Rensselaer and Peter W. Witbeck, 1789
- Cover letter from Stephen Van Rensselaer with note to Amos Eaton (enclosure missing), February 20, 1829