

Palmyra Jan 28<sup>th</sup> 1840

Dear Brother, Yours of the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. was received yesterday. The winter is not quite so severe as with you, but still shore cold than we are used to. Since the middle of Dec. it has been real winter weather, but the mercury did not sink lower than within 8 deg. of zero until the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst when it went to zero and on the 16<sup>th</sup> to 5 deg. below & on the 17<sup>th</sup> 10 deg. below which was the coldest. On Friday it was 8 deg. below zero. The Sunday before Christmas we had a very severe snow storm. It fell about 15 inches deep but drifted very much. Since we have had several light snows & there is about 20 inches on the ground at present. We are in the minority in both houses here and the Portrites talk strongly of repealing the Charter of the United States Bank. Bills for that purpose have been reported in both branches and the Whigs urge them to go on in doing so. Promising them that if the Bonus paid by the Bank and the debt due by the state to it is paid back, the Charter shall be laid at the Governors feet in thirty days. The paper that you directed me to send you was not sent. I know nothing about the names of the Editors or where they were in Philadelphia and had to direct a letter with, "To the Editors of the North American" on, an answer to which has not been rec<sup>d</sup>. I concluded to wait your next letter and then if you insisted on having it I would take another plan to get it. Since I saw a number at a public house and entered the names of the Editors in my Pocket Book. You may now expect it shortly. Times are bad very bad but not so bad as with you. We calculate for worse. Wheat is 90 cents. Rye 45 cents. Corn 3 1/2 cents. Oats 25 cents. Buckwheat 55 cents. Beef 7 1/2 cts. Pork 8 cts. Everything is plenty except Beef & Pork & they are very scarce. Your tax bill is monstrous. The County tax on our old place is \$21.34, & Road tax \$9.52 which is thought high, but is a mere song to your taxation. I am Collector and have collected all to \$230 - the main part of which 6 or 7 persons owe. The whole amount of County tax \$400 & Road tax \$590. I did not commence till the beginning of Dec. and got along with specie exchange better than last year.



The taxes here are 28 cents on the \$100 for County purposes  
and 12½ cents for Roads. And then in Pittsfield  
\$1.25 on the \$100 - nearly 4½ times as much for County  
uses & 62½ cts for Roads = 4½ times as much. That is tax-  
ing with a vengeance. And all this on unimproved land, what  
in the world must it be on your improved property. Enough  
nearly to turn them out of house & home if it is in propor-  
tion to mine. I think I will have to put a house on them  
240 Acres and send a Pennsylvania Tenant on in order  
to raise as much rent as will pay the taxes. In your  
next let me know what it would likely cost to have a  
frame house put up there, such as we have here for Tenant  
houses. The Gov. recommends a state tax here and I see no other way  
of the state getting along, but it cannot be as bad as with  
you. I wish you had mentioned how many votes were sold  
in Pittsfield township so that I could judge how thickly  
it is settled. If you have an old paper with the Election  
Returns of the several townships of your county please to send  
it. Our Tax Warrants are good for two years and can be  
renewed at any time by the Commissioners. There is a Rail Road  
from Reading to Philadelphia and the Company have  
a grant to extend it from Reading to Harrisburg and  
we expect it to go on this summer. It is thought it will  
be located either along the face of the Grand Hill or on  
the hill behind Campbellstown. The taking off the school  
tax is surely wrong, at least I would rather pay it than any other. We  
have not excepted the school system in our Township. It has been  
adopted by ¾ of the townships in the state and will eventually  
be so by all, but in our County by one only, East Hanover. I am  
one half here. I have supported the cause of its adoption in ours  
and we have worked them hard but as yet have not suc-  
ceeded. They rallied all their force against me last fall  
and succeeded in defeating me for Aspsper by 3 votes. Our  
Constitution says every poor man's child shall be taught gratis &  
the Aspsper is required to return all those that he thinks are  
entitled to the Commissioners, who are obliged to pay for them.  
For these 3 years I have kept up the schools in this way to the  
satisfaction of the poor, but was cursed by the Anti-Schoolmen.  
Lawyer last spring borrowed \$1000 for to meet matters. Guber had  
refused payment. They then got another release from one more of  
Joe Sawyer's heirs and then Guber made a payment.



A few days ago Gruber told me that one or two of the releases  
were good for nothing. He was wishing he could see Samuell but  
he never comes near him. By the way Gruber talks they will stand  
no chance of getting money this Spring and to borrow will be  
out of the question. Samuel keeps store on his fathers Mountain place  
and I seldom see him, the rest have all left the State, Robt.  
Inod gras sold out last fall and so did one of the Todd's  
and they intend moving west next summer. The Jones have  
also sold. I have heard nothing from Brothers in Illinois nor  
from the Newville folks. You forget to write what W. Lewis  
was doing or whether their family had increased or not. It  
is snowing, and pretty cold. The Sawyer suit is lying in the Su-  
preme Court and will undoubtedly be tried in July next.  
If I defeat them again there they will no doubt let me  
alone and that matter will rest forever. But if I am  
to account to them for our shares of the balance decreed  
against I will be obliged to file a Guardian account  
in fathers name for Robert, John, William, Sarah, Jane and  
Isabel Geddes minor children of Sam Geddes one of the  
daughters of John Sawyer Dec<sup>d</sup> and charge <sup>#</sup> 70 or 80 each  
which will cover our whole shares, and more. When their claim will  
be fully tried. The debt of our state is 34 million and will  
increase to 40 in two years if the money can be had. 1/2  
millions will have to be raised yearly by taxation to pay  
interest. I am in favor of a yearly distribution of the proceeds  
of the public lands amongst the states, which would I  
am persuaded be a fund sufficient to pay our state debt  
and in fact all the state debts in the Union in 25 years. And  
raise the Tariff high enough to support government.  
The present Presidential campaign will be the hottest that has  
ever yet been. Union seem to prevail in the Antimasonic and  
Whig ranks and if they remain so the day will be our own.  
Robert ought to be more careful of his health, for he surely  
can save himself if he will. Health only make any thing  
worth enjoyment in this world. That young wife is perhaps  
too hard for him and he is too spunky to yield. There is  
nothing which reduces a man so much as too much exertion  
to please the fair. Ask any Medical man and he will tell  
you take that of all things in moderation. All are well

Yours  
Samuell

W. John Geddes

William Geddes



und  
will

Palmira  
Jan 29<sup>th</sup>

1840

23-

W John Geddes  
Ann Arbor  
Michigan

