

New-York, February 10, 1798.

SIR,

I HAVE, for some months past, devoted my leisure hours to the collection of materials, with a view to writing an History of New-York. It is my design to begin with the first settlement of the Colony by the Dutch, and to end with the revolutionary war;—and to include in the work, besides those details of political transactions, which are the usual objects of historical composition, as large an account of the Indian tribes, and our relations with them—of Ecclesiastical affairs and proceedings—of our Agricultural and Commercial progress and enterprizes, &c. &c. &c. as will consist with the requisite brevity.

In an undertaking of this kind, it will readily occur to you, that much difficulty must arise from the scattered state of the documents necessary to be consulted; and that, after the largest accumulation of them which an individual can accomplish, much dependence must be placed on the kind assistance of literary Gentlemen, in different parts of the State.

With a view to obtaining such assistance, I take the liberty of transmitting to you the queries subjoined to this letter, and to beg the favour of your particular attention to the several objects which they respect. The smallest piece of information which you may find it convenient to furnish, relating to any of these topics of inquiry, will confer an obligation on me, and will promote a work which is undertaken with a view to public utility.

I should conclude with an apology for giving you the trouble of this application, had I not the fullest assurance that you feel an interest in every attempt, however feeble, to promote the diffusion of knowledge, and especially of that kind of knowledge in which every citizen of the State has a peculiar concern.

I am, Sir,

With sentiments of high respect and esteem,

Your humble servant,

SAMUEL MILLER.

QUERIES, &c.

1. When was the first permanent settlement made by the Dutch in New-Netherlands? Under what authority did these settlers come to America? What were their number and their condition, with respect to character and property?
2. What were the times of the arrival of the several Dutch Governors? Are there any records to be found, which exhibit the kind of government which they exercised—the grants which they made—the patents which they issued—or any of the other acts of their administration, especially before the arrival of Governor Kieft, in 1638?
3. Are there any records to be obtained which throw light on the number of inhabitants composing the Dutch Colony, at different periods, from its first establishment, until 1664? or which give any information concerning the state of Manners, of Agriculture, of Commerce, &c. among them?
4. What were the numbers of houses, and of inhabitants, in the towns of New-Amsterdam, and Fort Orange, at different times, under the Dutch administration; and what has been the rate of increase of these towns, under different names, since?
5. What records are to be found of the amities—the trade—the disputes—the wars—and the treaties between the Dutch Colony and the Indian Tribes? and between the Colony and State of New-York, and the same tribes, since?
6. What changes have taken place among the INDIAN TRIBES, as to numbers, employment, manners, customs, &c. since they were first known by white people?
7. When was your part of the State first settled by white people? What were the number and condition of these first settlers;—the circumstances attending their settlement;—and the motives which led to it?

8. What tribes, and what number of Indians did the first settlers of your district find when they went into it? What reception did they meet with? At what *rate*, and at what *time* did these Indians diminish, or evacuate the country?—N. B. All documents respecting the Indians, who have been in any wise connected with the Colony or State of New-York, or which tend to throw any light on their history, character, or customs, will be particularly acceptable.

9. Can you furnish any documents relating to curious legislative, judicial, or executive proceedings, at any period?—Any papers or facts, not generally known, respecting transactions and events which took place at the most interesting periods of our history—such as the arrival of new Governors—political changes—the revolutionary war, &c?

10. Can you furnish either the originals, or correct copies, of any important Charters—Patents—Commissions, &c. which tend to throw light on any part of our history?

11. At what time, and by whose agency did the most considerable towns in your county first take their rise? What were the circumstances and the motives which led to their establishment? What the advantages of their situation—and the kind of trade or business suiting them?

12. Can you furnish any pamphlets, or other records, which contain authentic information respecting any of the numerous TERRITORIAL DISPUTES between the Colony and State of New-York, and the surrounding colonies and states?

13. What have been the number and state of the MILITIA, at different periods, in New-York?

14. What was the state of RELIGION in this Colony, while under the Dutch administration? When and where was the first place of worship built? How many places of worship were there in the Colony previous to the surrender in 1664, and where situated? And what ecclesiastical authority were these churches under?

15. When were the CHURCHES in your county, of all denominations, first organized? What ministers have they had? What changes have they undergone, as to numbers, property, &c? What disputes have existed among them? And what remarkable customs have they retained or abolished?—N. B. All facts and anecdotes in any wise relating to the Ecclesiastical history of the State, will be particularly acceptable.

16. When were SCHOOLS and other seminaries of learning first instituted in New-York? Were there any under the Dutch government? If any, what were their number, character, &c? What have been the number and situation of schools, at different periods, since?

17. What records, facts, and anecdotes can you furnish, which throw light on the PROGRESS OF LUXURY in the State? When were the most conspicuous articles of luxurious indulgence, such as pleasure-carriages of different kinds, &c. first introduced, and by whom?

18. Can you give any information concerning the state of MORALS at different periods—such as the comparative frequency of *drunkenness—gaming—conjugal infidelity—prostitution*, &c?

19. What remarkable laws, customs, or usages, either local or general, have taken place in the State, at different periods? Are there any curious records or monuments, which have survived the ravages of time, which evince any thing remarkable in the state of public improvement, at the time they were formed?

20. When were NEGRO SLAVES first introduced into the Colony, and by whom? And what were their numbers, and the treatment they received at different periods?

21. When was the first PRINTING PRESS (if any) established in your county, and by whom? When was the first book or newspaper (if any) printed?

22. Have you any public LIBRARIES? (If any) when were they instituted? by whom? What is the number of volumes in each?

23. What were the dates, circumstances, and authors of the various REMARKABLE DISCOVERIES which have taken place in the State, either of *antiquities, natural curiosities*, or of any other kind?

24. At what times were the different kinds of *grain, stock, &c.* which were imported from Europe, first introduced into the Colony?

25. What information can you furnish concerning the dates and progress of the various *improvements* which have taken place, either in the department of *politics, commerce, manufactures, agriculture, literature, or humanity*?

26. Do you possess, or can you direct to any old MAPS, BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, STATE PAPERS, or any other kind of documents, which will in any wise, either directly or indirectly, serve the purpose in view?

N. B. Where original papers, or copies of originals, are not sent, a particular account is desired, of the authority from which the various articles of information are derived.

It may not be improper to add, that as the Legislature have been pleased to pass an act, giving me leave to inspect the records in the several public offices in the State, free of expence, probably no difficulty will occur in your obtaining access to such of the information asked for in the above queries, as may be lodged in said offices.