

The New York State College of Agriculture at Ovid (Willard)

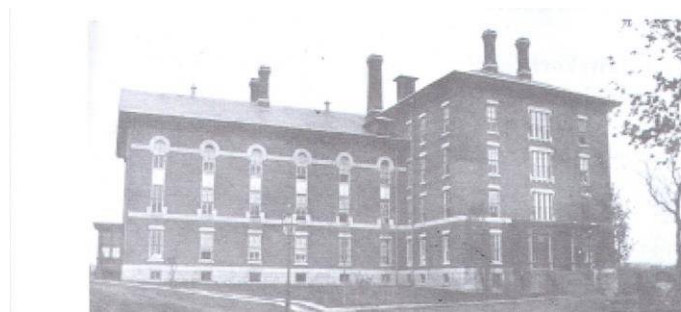
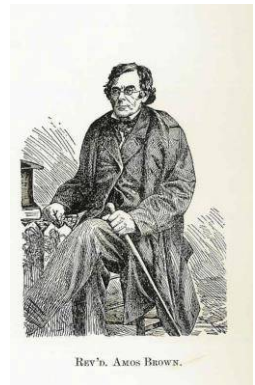


Before the Willard Asylum for the Insane was established, the site had been the New York State College of Agriculture, the first state chartered agricultural college in New York State. As early as 1842, the New York Agricultural Society had been urging the creation of agricultural schools or colleges. Many European countries had already established a college of agriculture to help train farmers to make better use of the new farming methods

and technology developing as part of the industrial revolution.

In 1851, John Delafield of Fayette township, became president of the state Agricultural Society and made it a priority to get the State Legislature to create an agricultural college. On April 1, 1853, Chapter 247 of state laws incorporated the New York State Agricultural College. The college's trustees selected Oaklands farm in Fayette, the home of Mr. Delafield, as the site for the college. Mr. Delafield's sudden death on October 22, 1853, however, led to nothing further being done for nearly two years.

In 1855 the idea of the state agricultural college was revived. Several communities – Ithaca, Aurora, Kings Ferry, Farmer (Interlaken), Sheldrake and Ovid -- aspired to be the chosen site. Ovid emerged victorious largely due to the promotional efforts of the Rev. Amos Brown, principal of the Seneca Collegiate Institute. He raised \$46,000 locally and got the New York State Legislature to grant a \$40,000 loan. Over six hundred acres were purchased in the towns of Ovid and Romulus on Seneca Lake near a tiny settlement called Baileytown (Ovid Landing). A large brick building was to be constructed to house students and provide classrooms for 350 students.



The College was opened on December 5, 1860. Major Marsena R. Patrick, a West Point graduate, was the college President. For \$200 a year students would receive classroom instruction and practical on-the-farm experience to become familiar with “the principles and practice of the methods of clearing and cleaning land,

nourishment of plants and grasses, restoration and exhaustion of the soil, rotation of crops and

WEED	IRA B	OVID	50	128
WRIGHT	JOSEPH	WATERLOO	500	247
WHARTENBY	BENJAMIN F	WATERLOO	50	
WILKINSON	O.W.	FAYETTE	50	
WOODEN	ROBERT	WATERLOO	50	
WALBRIDGE	H.D.	GENEVA	50	
WOODWORTH	ALANSON	FAYETTE	50	
WOOD	MICHAEL	OVID	50	
WHITE	THOMAS	OVID	50	
WILSON	HARRISON	OVID	25	244
WILLIAMS	J.B.	ITHACA	100	
WHITLOCK	BENJAMIN	NEW YORK	250	

Appendix D – Some Miscellaneous Pieces of Information

Clothing Recommendations.

It is recommended that every student shall keep himself supplied with the following articles:

- 1 Great coat of blue cloth.
- 1 Dress coat, vest and trousers.
- 2 Blue trousers for winter.
- 6 Trousers for summer, white.
- 2 Blue working jackets for winter.
- 4 White working jackets for summer.
- 1 Blue cloth cap, 1 glazed cap, 1 dress hat.
- 3 Black cravats or stocks.
- 2 Pairs of boots, 1 pair of shoes.
- 7 Shirts, 7 pairs of winter stockings, 7 pairs summer stockings.
- 6 Pocket handkerchiefs, 1 canvas clothes bag.

BOYS UPSTAGE PRESIDENT CHEEVER'S ELABORATE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

Agricultural College President Cheever made elaborate plans for the groundbreaking ceremony. He had gone to Geneva and purchased a spade, which he sharpened the night before the ceremony.



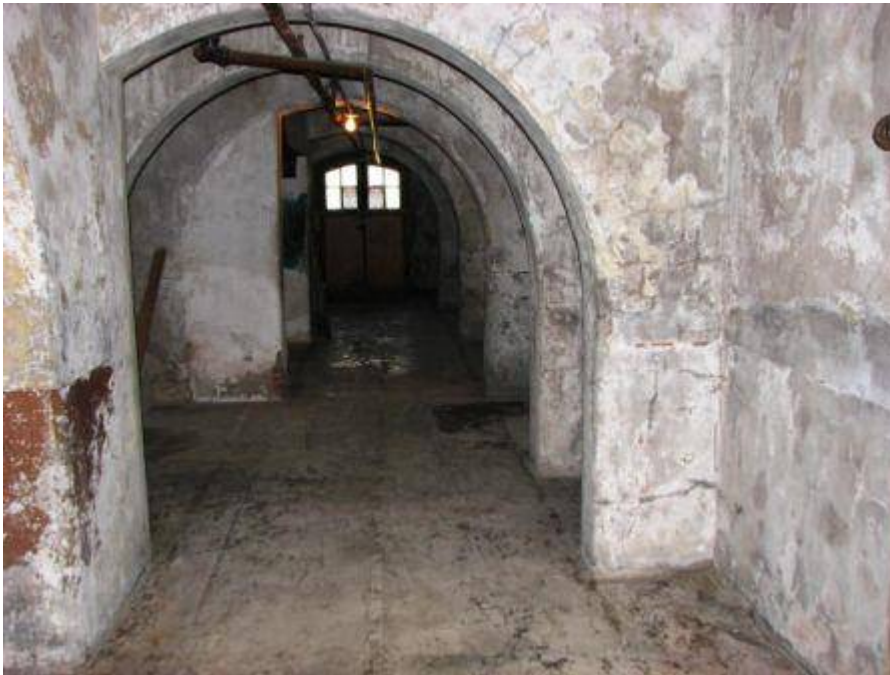
Four young men in Ovid heard of Cheever's elaborate plans for the next day and decided to spoil Cheever's plans. **They snuck on to the Agricultural College grounds in the night and cut off the sod from an area about ten yards square.** It wasn't until the next morning that President Cheever found out what these boys had done. One college trustee described Cheever's angry reaction by saying, "*When the worthy president repaired to the spot in the*

morning and saw how he had been outwitted, his anger knew no bounds, and instead of the solemn ceremony that he had planned, an exhibition of such an entirely different nature took place, that those who knew him best prudently kept out of the reach of his wrath for several hours."

JOHN CHAPIN'S COMMENT ON GETTING THE SCIENCE OUT OF THE FARMLAND

"...I remember that about three years after the hospital was opened, in going about the farm with the hospital farmer, I complained to him of the appearance of his crops. He remarked by way of encouragement that the farm had been operated by scientific men on so-called scientific principles, and that we need not expect to get good crops, until the science was entirely worked out or eliminated from the farm."¹

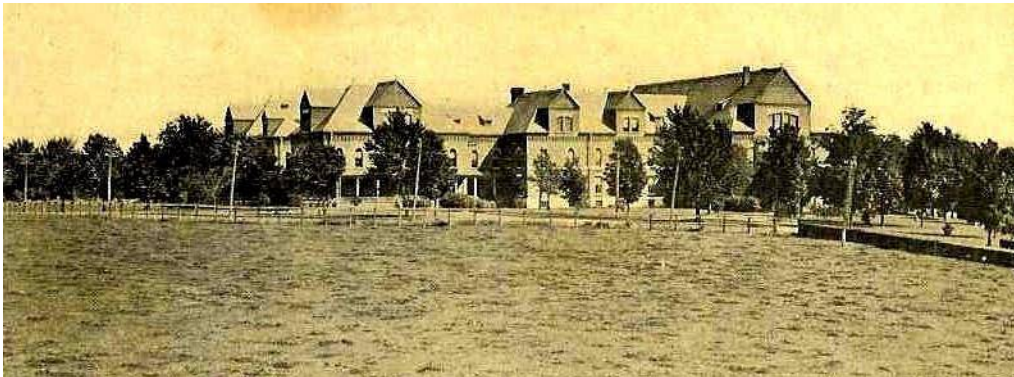
¹ John Chapin letter to Diedrich Willers in 1906. John Chapin was the Superintendent of the Willard Asylum at the time that the hospital farmer made the comment referred to above."



Basement walls and supports in the original Ag College section of the Grandview Building



Basement floor tiles as they looked in Jun3 2008



Postcard picture of the Grandview Building of the Willard Asylum for the Insane