

Cooperstown, February 5th 1805

Dear Sir, (Alexander McCollom)

On my way home I thought much of the situation of my property under your care and must come to some new arrangement. Your family is expensive and at present I fear supported totally out of my stock. You did not show me your account for furniture. Mrs. McCollum's board last summer and her clothing, which I thought too expensive. All these things I expect you have charged yourself with and every other expense giving credit to the store for Andrew board since October and out at about \$ 75 per annum. And if Mr. Potters boards with you. He must pay at least that in quarterly payments. The goods on hand keep unless cash or produce is paid for them, as it will not do to trust them. By my memorandum note the amount of goods and debts outstanding suppose them all good. They will not meet my expectations UNLESS Your OWN ACCOUNT IS VERY large.

I have thought as you are a young man with out any other prospects than that of your industriousness and reputation yet to be established (which I wish to protect). That in June by which time I hope to have the new store done. I will examine all the goods, and accounts with care when they are moved in. and should there be a prospect of your going on with the present capital so as to net me 6 percent annually, that you may have the same for 7 years unless I discover you are sinking the stock. In that case it will be best for me to save all I can, as I cannot loose my property which I have got by the dint of industry. Collect the debts as fast as you can from such as are off the Patent and those on, strive to get something that will turn to money to help yourself to a new apportionment of goods. I am sorry you let Mr. Farr junior get so deep in debt. His father is able to pay what he owes, but the young man run in debt without a prospect of payment in any reasonable time to help replace the goods he had out. I told you clearly and plainly in the first place that I should not add to the first capitol and so speaks our routine. You have trusted them out contrary to my frequent cautions at a distance. I expected you to trust some of the first settlers but not above ten or 15 pounds script and James Farr and Rich and Stacy, who I named to you and who are able to pay. And perhaps others can do the same.

There is no prospect of profit until the debts are collected. But every marker of deep loss. In the last case all you have had out you will be in debt for, which will be a load for many years hanging over you. Therefore now take my advice, which you have refused to do heretofore.

And Mrs. McCollum was pleased to call it brandishing When I saw her clothed in the most expensive articles in the store which you were in debt for. I expected your board would come out or the store but no others save Andrews for a year. As such the settlement must be made. Now for my advice, which is the last in me, I shall give it. Board no man on my property I forbid it! Begin saving as poor young beginners always must. Keep a true account of every farthing either severally or individually taking out of the store. Answer your creditor's letters with dispatch. Mr. Pomeroy and Holt has wrote you several times. You have not answered a line. That is unmercantile. And puts me to shame. That I should place a man over property so unacquainted with business. It was remarked to me last Fall by a prudent wise man that it was questionable whether you were in my interest, from the frequent remarks and opinions you were making on my

mode of settlements. This business you are no judge of, and you hurt yourself by distrusting any of my plans! The store is all you have in charge and my furniture until I want it. But before I have the last idea. I do not believe nor will I believe you ever opposed to my interest, you cannot be. For most certainly I wish to push you forward in the world, but not to my own loss. Nor is there a young man in the state entrusted without security with so handsome a capital as yourself. I have frequently and gently rebuked you for a positive notion you have got of your knowledge in trade. You are mistaken many years experience authorizes me to say so. You have all to prove yet that will give you wealth and consequence and you must submit to advice. And that from a man interested in your welfare. My orders and requests must be attended to it is reasonable they should be. By Potter Goff I shall send a full and complete power of attorney to my brother and him to transact all my business in my absence. Reserving to you the care of the store until we make some arrangement in June. And to Andrew, what law business and papers may be wanted done and drawn by me or them as long as he does it to satisfaction but really he went on the last time and at other that I have him there like a mad man. It is very painful to me to hear so many complaints of his impertinence and haughty courage over the poor settlers. He hurts the whole transaction and himself.

Nothing gives a man consequence like a meek and quiet deportment attending to his business. Steadily, not claiming knowledge, but acting wisely with modesty for it is better that a man show but half what he knows, than a particle more. Least he be set down as a conceited assuming man. In such case what little he knows is turned into ridicule by them that know less, but husband their knowledge better. I wish and desire you to avoid that odious habit of profane swearing it lessens a young among all thoughtful people to be constantly uttering such language. You and Andrew must break off. Your situation there would lead the people to look up to you if your language and conduct was meek and mild but determined in just manner. There is no favoring yourself on public opinion. Every attempt sinks the man that attempts it. Do not think all I say and have said proceeds from a wish to find fault. I do it and have done it from a desire to put you in the right way, which you and Andrew both need. What I state as to the property under your care is fair and just. I took it out of the hands of Andrew? Because I was convinced he had a spell of derangement. And of course it became improper to have anything but what relates to his practice under his charge.

With Greatest Regards I subscribe myself your friend, W. Cooper