

<b>Title:</b>	War of 1812 Officer's Letter		
<b>Creator:</b>	Henry DeWitt		
<b>Dates of Material:</b>	January 6, 1814	<b>Record Group Number:</b>	700
<b>Contents:</b>	<p>A letter written by Lt. Henry DeWitt of Sackets Harbour to Lt. John Gifford, both of the 25th Infantry. The letter was written after the arrest of DeWitt for "damning" his arresting officer (Captain James Burbidge who was also of the 25th Infantry) and drawing forage for a horse when he was not entitled to it. He also borrowed a horse from a citizen of Canada and did not return it despite his promise to do so. In this letter, DeWitt tries to explain his actions.</p> <p>John Gifford was the son of Captain William B. Gifford (1747-1815). Both men served as Officers in the New York State Militia during the Revolutionary War. John Gifford served in the 25th Infantry during the War of 1812 and was involved in the Battle of Chippawa and the Battle of Lundy's Lane.</p> <p>Transcription [verbatim]</p> <p>Dear friend,</p> <p>With satisfaction I acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> for which I shall consider myself very much obligated to you. I am not at all surprised at the contents, for I conceive there's nothing (let it be of ever so base a nature) but what Captain Burbidge is capable of doing – the meeting of the officers (if there has been one) on some business which you mention, I had not heard of until the receipt of your letter. Captain Burbidge has taken it upon himself to arrest me, a brief of the charges alleged I will now proceed to give you, I am charged with damning Captain B. with drawing forage for a horse when I was not entitled to it and with borrowing a horse of a citizen in Canada and not returning it, according to promise ----- I presume you must have heard that I was appointed to act as paymaster by Colonel Jesup and that I paid the reg. two monthly payments cond. upon this order (which was how) I drew forage for sixteen days, and the [illegible] was ordered by Captain White then commanding officer of the regiment ----- With regard to the horse it's a [illegible], I borrowed a horse from a citizen near Chippawa for the purpose of going to Williamsville, to pay the sick and wounded of that place of our regiment, and before I could complete the payment of them [some crossed out words] the army returned up the river to opposite Black Rock, which rendered it impossible for me to return the horse without injuring the owner more than his value --- had the horse been returned by a flag of truce, the British would undoubtedly have found the owner guilty of aiding and assisting the enemy, in which case they would have deprived him of the little all he possessed. ----- I, therefore am determined with the advice of several officers to keep him, until I should have an opportunity of returning him to</p>		

	<p>the owner. I had proposed changes to arrest Captain B. of which he was apprised, and being senior officer, he arrested me, before mine could be carried into effect --- I have written to Colonel Jesup for the order he gave me, in writing and if he noes not think proper to send it me, I shall insist upon his appearing in court as an evidencer.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Believe me sirs your obedient servant, H. DeWitt</p>		
<b>Physical Description / Condition:</b>	The letter is 2 pages and is a handwritten letter on both sides of an 9 ½ by 7 ¾ single folding sheet.		
<b>Location:</b>	Brock University Archives		
<b>Source Information:</b>	Acquired from PBA Galleries, Sept. 2019		
<b>Related material:</b>	John Gifford fonds, 1814 – RG 579		
<b>Described by:</b>	Anne Adams	<b>Date:</b>	Sept. 25, 2019