



## VILLAGE OF AURORA

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Ms. Marie Chapman Carroll  
Chairperson, Board of Trustees  
Wells College  
170 Main Street  
Aurora, NY 13026

by email: [75mcarroll@gmail.com](mailto:75mcarroll@gmail.com)

Dear Ms. Chapman Carroll,

We appreciate your attention to the issues discussed at the Village Board meeting held on Saturday, November 16, 2024, and attended by President Henking. The Village Board and I are hopeful that the arrangements concerning the stagecoaches provide a model for other important matters, including the future of the Wells College Archives (the "Archives.")

This communication is to suggest that Wells College and the Village of Aurora move forward with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would provide a new, permanent, safe, accessible home for the Archives that are incredibly important to Wells alumni, staff and supporters, as well as Aurora residents. The Village envisions potential MOU terms along the following lines:

- The Archives to be transferred to and permanently known as the "Wells College Collection" within the Village of Aurora Archives.
- The Village to own and care for the Archives in perpetuity.
- The Village to digitize the Wells College Collection, with meta data identifying it as the Wells College Collection, subject to grants and funds for digitizing, and to make the digitized material freely available (subject to applicable copyright and pre-existing restrictions).

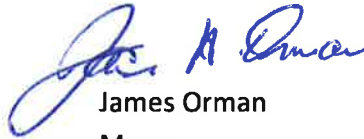
- The Village to construct or otherwise provide a suitable archive facility to house the Wells College Collection along with its own archives.
- The parties to acknowledge that a gift of the Archives to the Village is appropriate, serves the public good and public interest; that a gift of the Archives furthers and preserves the intentions of those who placed materials with Wells for safekeeping; that the value of the materials is primarily intrinsic and dependent upon their context as a collection; that setting a monetary value on the Wells Archives would be speculative, time-consuming, and require establishing provenance item by item.
- Transfer to include currently available free-standing bookcases, file cabinets, file boxes, racks, and other means of holding or organizing the Archives.
- Wells to store the Archives in climate-controlled conditions until transfer is permitted by law. However, the Village will consider assuming responsibility for safe and suitable transportation and storage in the interim, if such suitable storage on the campus cannot be maintained or if Wells otherwise proposes to move the Archives from the Campus in the interim.
- The Archives to include all papers, books, pamphlets, records, maps, drawings, files, accounts, ledgers, photographs, negatives, film, video, audio recordings, microfilm, letters, scrapbooks, typescripts, manuscripts, ephemera, digital catalogs, records, and related materials now or formerly known as the Wells College Archives (whether they strictly relate to the history of Wells or strictly to the history of Aurora) and be included in the transfer to the Village under the Plan of Dissolution.
- The Archives would not include student records, academic transcripts, and employee records or other similar protected materials.

This is not a definitive list of discussion points, however, I trust it is enough to show our serious intentions and start a conversation in good faith. The Village's go-between in such talks with Wells will be two executive officers of the Village of Aurora Historical Society, a 501.c.3 education corporation, mentioned in my previous letter of September 25, 2024. The Society is already entrusted under an MOU with the Village to assist with the care of the Village's historic resources. Its track record shows that it ably and reliably does an excellent job raising funds, obtaining grants, and hiring the appropriate professionals for everything it undertakes on behalf of the Village's historic resources. It has already raised significant sums expressly for the effort of keeping the Wells College Archives local. It has the capacity and has made the commitment to raise still more funds to assist the Village with this effort and see the project through if the Village becomes the steward of the Wells College Archives.

We trust that working out a mutually beneficial agreement, such as outlined above, will serve to preserve the public trust and reliance that was for so long placed in Wells College by Village and Town of Ledyard historians, officials, residents, students and College staff when items were placed with Wells for safekeeping. It would avoid the claims, objections and adverse publicity that would arise over provenance should some other disposition or dispersal of the Archives be proposed. Such protraction in the settlement of Wells College's dissolution would not be in the best interests of either the College or the community.

Thank you for your consideration of this request about an MOU for the purpose of safeguarding the Archives and providing a permanent and honorable home for them in Aurora.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James A. Orman", is written over the printed name.

James Orman  
Mayor

cc. Susan Henking, President, Wells College  
Shirley Egan, President, Village of Aurora Historical Society  
Ken Larson, Treasurer, Village of Aurora Historical Society  
Mary Beth Bianconi, Delaware Engineering