

route except by the way of Lake Ontario, around Niagara Falls by the contemplated ship canal, for the construction of which, a company had been incorporated in 1798.

Mr. MORRIS was possessed of a vigorous mind and of clear ideas, and he had a rare facility of expressing himself on paper. He did not write ambiguous letters, although sometimes romantic. When writing his beautiful letters to Mr. PARISH in December, 1800, he writes from the standpoint of his recently traveled route to Fort Erie and "so back again," and of his knowledge of the business route of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, and of the projected Niagara Ship Canal; and that letter has been made to appear ambiguous perhaps by the projection and successful completion of the overland canal since its date, or at least its meaning has been perverted by claimants for fame in connection with this canal since the decease of Mr. MORRIS, and after the success and popularity of this work had become well assured; although the letter of MORRIS to GEN. HENRY LEE, written about thirty days after the date of that letter to JOHN PARISH, shows to a certainty that his meaning was "to sail — into Lake Erie" by the Ontario route.

It is also shown in the paper read on the third of February, 1868, that it is impossible to reconcile the statements of Mr. DEWITT in his letter to WILLIAM DARBY, in 1822, about his interview with Mr. MORRIS at Schenectady, in 1803,—with other conversations and writings on the same subject, by Mr. MORRIS, while pursuing his way on that journey.

I am not questioning the integrity of purpose in Mr. DEWITT for writing as he did in the letter above mentioned. That letter purports to give from memory the substance of an informal conversation between Mr. MORRIS and himself nineteen years previously,—about the first of September, 1803,—while the conversation and writing of Mr. MORRIS a few days afterward, show that he had then no project nor any conception of one, for a water communication with Lake Erie except by a canal