

George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, February 1, 1787.

Sir: I am perfectly satisfied with your determination respecting the Negroes. The money will be infinitely more agreeable to me than property of that sort. It will too, if I should want any of those people, procure them on more advantageous terms than I offered.

I beg that the Certificates may be no longer delayed. I have already sunk one hundred pounds specie by consenting to take them at 4 for 1 at the moment I did this, as appeared by the Richmond Gazette which came to my hands a day or two afterwards the price of them was 4½ and five. Now Doctr. Stuart tells me the latter is with difficulty obtained. I wish therefore to do something with these before my loss becomes greater.

The money sent by Mr. Diggs came safe. I am, etc.63

63. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

The volume of the Washington "Letter Books," which commences with Feb. 1, 1787, is in an unidentified handwriting. The copying is so inaccurately and carelessly done as to render palpable corrections not only advisable but necessary.

*To HENRY KNOX

Mount Vernon, February 3, 1787.

My dear Sir: I feel myself exceedingly obliged to you for the full, and friendly communications in your letters of the 14th. 21st. and 25th. ult; and shall (critically

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as matters are described in the latter) be extremely anxious to know the issue of the movements of the forces that were assembling, the one to support, the other to oppose the constitutional rights of Massachusetts. The moment is, indeed, important! If government shrinks, or is unable to enforce its laws; fresh manœuvres will be displayed by the insurgents, anarchy and confusion must prevail, and every thing will be turned topsy turvey in that State; where it is not probable the mischiefs will terminate.

In your letter of the 14th. you express a wish to know my intention respecting the Convention, proposed to be held in Philada. in May next. In *confidence* I inform you, that it is not, at this time, my purpose to attend it. When this matter was first moved in the Assembly of this State, some of the principal characters of it wrote to me, requesting to be permitted to put my name in the delegation. To this I objected. They again pressed, and I again refused; assigning

among other reasons my having declined meeting the Society of the Cincinnati at that place, about the same time, and that I thought it would be disrespectfull to that body (to whom I ow'd much) to be there on any other occasion. Notwithstanding these intimations, my name was inserted in the Act; and an official communication thereof made by the Executive to me, to whom, at the sametime that I expressed my sense for the confidence reposed in me, I declared, that as I saw no prospect of my attending, it was my wish that my name might not remain in the delegation, to the exclusion of another. To this I have been requested, in emphatical terms, not to decide absolutely, as no inconvenience would result from the non-appointment of another, at least for sometime.

Thus the matter stands, which is the reason of my saying to you in *confidence* that at present I retain my first intention, not to go. In the meanwhile as I have the fullest conviction of your friendship for, and attachment to me; know your abilities to judge; and your means of information, I shall receive any communications from you, respecting this business, with thankfulness. My first wish is, to do for the best, and to act with propriety; and you know me too well, to

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believe that reserve or concealment of any circumstance or opinion, would be at all pleasing to me. The legality of this Convention I do not mean to discuss, nor how problematical the issue of it may be. That powers are wanting, none can deny. Through what medium they are to be derived, will, like other matters, engage public attention. That which takes the shortest course to obtain them, will, in my opinion, under present circumstances, be found best. Otherwise, like a house on fire, whilst the most regular mode of extinguishing it is contended for, the building is reduced to ashes. My opinion of the energetic wants of the federal government are well known; publickly and privately I have declared it; and however constitutionally it may be for Congress to point out the defects of the fœderal System, I am strongly inclined to believe that it would not be found the most efficacious channel for the recommendation, more especially the alterations, to flow, for reasons too obvious to enumerate.

The System on which you seem disposed to build a National government is certainly more energetic, and I dare say, in every point of view more desirable than the present one; which, from experience, we find is not only slow, debilitated, and liable

to be thwarted by every breath, but is defective in that secrecy, which for the accomplishment of many of the most important national purposes is indispensably necessary; and besides, having the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary departments concentered, is exceptionable. But at the sametime I give this opinion, I believe that the political machine will yet be much tumbled and tossed, and possibly be wrecked altogether, before such a system as you have defined will be adopted. The darling Sovereignities of the States individually, The Governors elected and elect. The Legislators, with a long train of et cetera whose political consequence will be lessened, if not annihilated, would give their weight of opposition to such a revolution. But I may be speaking without book, for scarcely ever going off my own farms I see few people who do not call upon me; and am very little acquainted with the Sentiments of the great world; indeed, after what I have seen, or rather after what I have heard, I shall be surprized

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at nothing; for if three years since any person had told me that at this day, I should see such a formidable rebellion against the laws and constitutions of our own making as now appears I should have thought him a bedlamite, a fit subject for a mad house. Adieu, you know how much, and how sincerely I am etc.

Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for yourself, Mrs. Knox and the family.

[MS.H.S.]

To HENRY LEE

Mount Vernon, February 4, 1787.

My dear Sir: I thank you for asking my commands to Fredericksburg. It is not my wish to be your competitor in the purchase of any of Mr. Hunters tradesmen: especially as I am in a great degree principled against increasing my number of Slaves by purchase and suppose moreover that Negroes sold on credit will go high. yet if you are not disposed to buy the Bricklayer which is advertized for Sale, for your own use, find him in the vigour of life, from report a good workman and of tolerable character and his price does not exceed one hundred, or a few more pounds, I should be glad if you would buy him for me. I have much work in this way to do this Summer. If he has a family, with which he is to be sold; or from whom he would reluctantly part I decline the purchase, his feelings I would not be the means of hurting in the latter case, nor *at any* rate be incumbered with the former. I am, etc.⁶⁴

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS PETERS

Mount Vernon, February 9, 1787.

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Sir: As your last letter of the 3d. inst. places me on better ground with respect to seed Barley (than) your former one of the 18th of November did, and as (it) will be inconvenient and injurious to me to withhold some of my best ground from Oats till it may be too late to put this ground in to advantage from the uncertain expectation of Barley.

This letter is to pray that you will decline all further trouble in inquiring for the latter, on my account. as I have wrote to the same Gentlemen who procured me 50 Bushels (and could then have got an 100) to add 50 more if now to be had. If your Barley from the Eastward should arrive in Season to be sown, is of the spring sort, and good in quality, and you can spare a few bushels to put me in Seed against another year I shall be obliged by it; a dozen bushels may suffice.

Clover Seed I have supplied myself with long ago. I hope you will have the goodness to excuse me for the trouble I have given you in making enquiries. I am, etc.⁶⁵

65. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, February 11, 1787.

Dear Sir: As we are now on the verge of the middle of Feby: and the season is fast approaching when the ground should be in readiness to receive spring grain, permit me to remind you of the Barley you were so obliging as to procure for me, and beg (as I have been disappointed in another expectation) that the 50 bushels may be increased to one hundred, if in your power to do it conveniently. At any rate write me decidedly, what I have to expect, that I may not, in expectation of Barley, with-hold my best grounds from oats till it is too late to sow them, to advantage. Ascertain the freight, in the Bill of Lading that I am to pay for the Barley and Clover Seed: without this is previously done, impositions are but too commonly met with.

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Since writing to you I have met with, and obtained the quantity wanted, of Jerusalem Artichoke. What price would well cured Herrings sell for with you, by the barrel? Are they in demand? and what would be the freight from this River to Philadelphia? I have about 50

Barrels that I am told are good. With great esteem I am, etc.

P.S. If the Vessel by which you send the Barley and should not sailed, pray send me two good and Strong linnen Wheels.

I would thank you for paying Messr. Sedden and Co. for the Columbian Magazines which they have sent me.⁶⁶

To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, February 11, 1787.

It is now two or three months since I requested, in very explicit terms, that if my flour was not then sold, that it might be disposed of for whatever it would fetch, and the money remitted to me by Doctr. Stuart who was then attending the Assembly, or some other safe conveyance. As I have heard nothing from you since, it is probable the letter may have miscarried. I therefore beg that no further delay may arise in transmitting me the

⁶⁶. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

proceeds, as I want the money.

In the letter alluded to above, to the best of my recollection I asked if well cured Herrings commanded a ready sale at Norfolk and what pr. Barrel? I am, etc.⁶⁶

To PRESIDENT BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Mount Vernon, February 11, 1787.

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Dear Sir: On the 3d. of Novr., I had the honr. of addressing your Excellency, a letter of which the enclosed is a copy. Having heard nothing from you since, I am led to apprehend a miscarriage of it, and therefore give you the trouble of a duplicate; not knowing what reply to make to Sir Edward Neweham, or what more to do in this business until I am favoured with your answer. With the greatest respect and regard. I have the honor etc.⁶⁷

66. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

67. From a facsimile. The original was in the possession of a Col. Ellicott F. Shepard in 1889.

To CHARLES WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, February 14, 1787.

Dear Charles: When the enclosed was written, I knew nothing of George's⁶⁸ intention of visiting Berkeley. The safe conveyance afforded by him, is very favorable, and [I] gladly embraced it.

Having seen Bushrod and Corbin Washington on their way from Berkeley, their information is the subject of this letter and is exceedingly distressing to me, inasmuch as I have not the means of affording immediate relief. By them I learn that the remaining negroes of my deceased Brother Samuel's Estate are under an execution, and a momentary sale of them may be expected, and this too by the extraordinary conduct of Mr. White in applying moneys received towards the discharge of a Bond *not in Suit* when they ought to have given it in payment of Mr. Alexander's claim, on which judgment had been, or was on the point of being obtained. How in the name of Heaven came Mr. White to be vested with powers to dispose of the money he should recover unaccompanied with instructions respecting the disposal. will not Mr. Alexander when he sees every exertion making to pay him have mercy on the orphan? Can he as a

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68. George Augustine Washington.

Father and man of feeling see the Fatherless reduced from Competency to distress untouched? If there was an unwillingness to pay him, if property had not been sold for the express purpose of doing it, and if there was not a prospect of [its] being done in a very short time, it would be right in Mr. Alexander to push matters to extremity; but when (as I am informed) in the case every exertion is making to satisfy him, to cause perhaps three pounds worth of property to be sold to raise 20/cash, this would be inconsistent with that benevolence which should be characteristic of every man and to which, from what I have heard of the Gentleman, he is justly entitled. I therefore think as Executor to the will and guardian to the boys, you should before the dye is cast apply by fair and candid representation to Mr. Alexander on this subject, not in the cold mode of letter, but personally, to see if this evil cannot be averted. Vain would it be for me to offer Mr. Alexander any assurances of the money at a short given day. I cannot get it from those who owe me without suit, and I hate to sue them. I have offered lands for sale at very moderate prices, but have not been able to sell them. Otherwise, or if I could raise the money by any other means, I would relieve my nephews without hesitation from the impending evil. Indeed, I would essay any thing to save the estate; for if the negros are sold for ready money, they will go for a song. To add aught to this is unnecessary. With the most affectionate regards.

My love, in which Mrs. Washington joins, to my sister and the family.⁶⁹

To MARY WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, February 15, 1787.

Hond. Madam: In consequence of your communication to George Washington,⁷⁰ of your want of money, I take the (first safe) conveyance by Mr. John Dandridge to send you 15 Guineas, which believe me is all I have, and which indeed ought to have been paid many

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days ago to another, agreeable to my own assurances. I have now demands upon me for more than 500 £, three hundred and forty odd of which is due for the tax of 1786; and I know not where or when, I shall receive one shilling with which to pay it.

69. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

70. George Augustine Washington.

In the last two years I made no crops. In the first I was obliged to buy corn and this year have none to sell, and my wheat is so bad, I cannot either eat it myself nor sell it to others, and Tobacco I make none. Those who owe me money cannot or will not pay it without suits, and to sue is to do nothing; whilst my expences, not from any extravagance, or an inclination on my part to live splendidly, but for the absolute support of my family and the visitors who are constantly here, are exceedingly high; higher indeed than I can support without selling part of my estate, which I am disposed to do, rather than run in debt, or continue to be so; but this I cannot do, without taking much less than the lands I have offered for sale are worth. This is really and truly my situation. I do not however offer it as any excuse for not paying you what may really be due; for let this be little or much, I am willing, however unable, to pay to the utmost farthing; but it is really hard upon me when you have taken every thing you wanted from the Plantation by which money could be raised, when I have not received one farthing, directly nor indirectly from the place for more than twelve years, if ever, and when, in that time I have paid, as appears by

Mr. Lund Washington's accounts against me (during my absence) Two hundred and sixty odd pounds, and by my own account Fifty odd pounds out of my own Pocket to you, besides (if I am rightly informed) every thing that has been raised by the Crops on the Plantation. Who to blame, or whether any body is to blame for these things I know not, but these are facts; and as the purposes for which I took the Estate are not answered, nor likely to be so, but dissatisfaction on all sides have taken place, I do not mean to have any thing more to say to your Plantation or negros since the first of January, except the fellow

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who is here, and who will not, as he has formed connections in this neighborhood, leave it. As experience has proved him, I will hire. Of this my intention, I informed my brother John sometime ago, whose death I sincerely lament on many accounts, and on this painful event condole with you most sincerely. I do not mean by this declaration to withhold any aid or support I can give from you; for whilst I have a shilling left, you shall have part, if it is wanted, whatever my own distresses may be. What I shall then give, I shall have credit for; now I have not, for tho' I have received nothing from your Quarter, and am told that every farthing goes to you, and have moreover paid between 3 and 4 hundred pounds besides out of my own pocket, I am viewed as a delinquent, and considered perhaps by

the world as [an] unjust and undutiful son. My advice to you, therefore, is to do one of two things with the Plantation. Either let your grandson Bushrod Washington, to whom the land is given by his Father, have the whole interest there, that is, lands and negros, at a reasonable rent; or, next year (for I presume it is too late this, as the overseer may be engaged) to let him have the land at a certain yearly rent during your life; and hire out the negros. This would ease you of all care and trouble, make your income certain, and your support ample. Further, my sincere and pressing advice to you is, to break up housekeeping, hire out all the rest of your servants except a man and a maid, and live with one of your children. This would relieve you entirely from the cares of this world, and leave your mind at ease to reflect undisturbedly on that which ought to come. On this subject I have been full with my Brother John, and it was determined he should endeavor to get you to live with him. He alas is no more, and three, only of us remain. My house is at your service, and [I] would press you most sincerely and most devoutly to accept it, but I am sure, and candor requires me to say, it will never answer your purposes in any shape whatsoever. For in truth it may be compared

to a well resorted tavern, as scarcely any strangers who are going from north to south, or from south to north, do not spend a day or two at it. This would, were you to be an inhabitant of it, oblige you to do one of 3 things: 1st, to be always dressing to appear in company; 2d, to come into [the room] in a dishabille, or 3d, to be as it were a prisoner

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in your own chamber. The first you'd not like; indeed, for a person at your time of life it would be too fatiguing. The 2d, I should not like, because those who resort here are, as I observed before, strangers and people of the first distinction. And the 3d, more than probably, would not be pleasing to either of us. Nor indeed could you be retired in any room in my house; for what with the sitting up of company, the noise and bustle of servants, and many other things, you would not be able to enjoy that calmness and serenity of mind, which in my opinion you ought now to prefer to every other consideration in life. If you incline to follow this advice, the House and lots on which you now live you may rent, and enjoy the benefit of the money arising therefrom as long as you live. This with the rent of the land at the little falls,⁷¹ and the hire of your negros, would bring you in an income which would be much more than sufficient to answer all your wants

71. Of the Rappahannock.

and make ample amends to the child you live with; for myself I should desire nothing; if it did not, I would most cheerfully contribute more. A man, a maid, the phaeton and two horses, are all you would want. To lay in a sufficiency for the support of these would not require $\frac{1}{4}$ of your income, the rest would purchase every necessary you could possibly want, and place it in your power to be serviceable to those with whom you may live, which no doubt would be agreeable to all parties.

There are such powerful reasons in my mind for giving this advice that I cannot help urging it with a degree of earnestness which is uncommon for me to do. It is, I am convinced, the only means by which you can be happy. The cares of a family, without any body to assist you; the charge of an estate the profits of which depend upon wind, weather, a good overseer, and honest man, and a thousand other circumstances, cannot be right or proper at your advanced age, and for me, who am absolutely prevented from attending to my own plantations, which are almost within call of me, to attempt the care of yours, would be folly in the extreme; but [by] the mode I have pointed out,

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you may reduce your income to a certainty, be eased of all trouble, and if you are so disposed, may be perfectly happy; for happiness depends more upon the internal frame of a person's own mind, than on the externals in the world. Of the last, if you will pursue the plan here recommended, I am sure you can want nothing that is essential. The other depends wholly upon yourself, for the riches of the Indies cannot purchase it.

Mrs. Washington, George and Fanny join me in every good wish for you, and I am, honored madame, your most dutiful and aff. son.⁷²

To BATTAILE MUSE

Mount Vernon, February 15, 1787.

Sir: I have just received your letter of the 4th. inst. and the 50 pounds sent by Mr. A. Morton.

Mr. Wales accepted the order upon him and says he will endeavour to pay it when it becomes due, but as the time of

72. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

payment has not yet arrived I cannot say anything decided upon it. It is not in my power to send a person to Leesburg agreeable to your request as the time which you mentioned to be there has already elapsed.

Tho' I am not in want of Horses at present, yet, as it may prevent my tenants from being distressed, and perhaps be the only chance I may have to secure my rent, I will consent to take a few, at a reasonable price, provided they are young, strong and serviceable I should prefer good breeding mares, but old horses I will not receive at any rate. The cut money in the 50 pounds mentioned above fell short by weight 10/6 I do not regard the present

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difficiency, but only mention it, that in future, you may receive it by weight as that is the only way in which it will pass here. I am, etc.⁷³

73. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CHARLES WILLSON PEALE

Mount Vernon, February 16, 1787.

Sir: You will receive by the Stage the body of my Gold Pheasant, packed up in wool agreeable to your directions. He made his Exit yesterday, which enables me to comply with your request much sooner than I wished to do. I am afraid the others will follow him but too soon, as they all appear to be drooping; whether it is owing to their being confined, or to the Climate, I am not able to say: I am very desirous of giving them Liberty, but the danger of their being taken by the Hawkes prevents me. I am etc.⁷⁴

To THOMAS STONE⁷⁵

Mount Vernon, February 16, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 30th Ult^o. came duly to hand. To give an opinion in a cause of so much importance as that which has warmly agitated two branches of your legislature, and

74. In the writing of Tobias Lear. From a photostat of the original in the possession of Miss Eleanor Bruno, of Ridley Park, Pa.

75. Member of the Maryland Senate.

which, from the appeal that is made, is likely to create great and perhaps dangerous divisions, is rather a delicate matter; but, as this diversity of opinion is on a subject which has, I believe, occupied the minds of most men, and as my sentiments thereon have been

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fully and decidedly expressed long before the Assembly either of Maryland or this State were convened, I do not scruple to declare that, if I had a voice in your Legislature, it would have been given decidedly against a paper emission upon the general principles of its utility as a representative, and the necessity of it as a medium. and as far as I have been able to understand its advocates (for the two papers you sent me were the same, and contained no reasons of the House of Delegates for the local want of it in your State, though I have seen and given them a cursory reading elsewhere) I should have been very little less opposed to it.⁷⁶

To assign reasons for this opinion would be as unnecessary as tedious. The ground has been so often trod, that a place hardly remains untouched. But in a word, the necessity arising from a want of specie is represented as greater than it really is. I contend, that it is by the substance, not with the shadow of a thing, we are to be benefitted. The wisdom of man, in my humble opinion, cannot

76. The Maryland House of Delegates had passed an act to issue bills of credit for £350,000 for a loan, redeemable in 10 years at an interest rate of 6%. The Senate refused to agree to this.

at this time devise a plan, by which the credit of paper money would be long supported; consequently depreciation keeps pace with the quantity of the emission, and articles, for which it is exchanged, rise in a greater ratio than the sinking value of the money. Wherein, then, is the farmer, the planter, the artisan benefitted? The debtor may be, because, as I have observed, he gives the shadow in lieu of the substance; and, in proportion to his gain, the creditor or the body politic suffer. Whether it be a legal tender or not, it will, as hath been observed very truly, leave no alternative. It must be that or nothing. An evil equally great is, the door it immediately opens for speculation, by which the least designing, and perhaps most valuable, part of the community are preyed upon by the more knowing and crafty speculators.

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But, contrary to my intention and declaration, I am offering reasons in support of my opinion; reasons too, which of all others are least pleasing to the advocates for paper money. I shall therefore only observe generally, that so many people have suffered by former emissions, that, like a burnt child who dreads the fire, no person will touch it who can possibly avoid it. The natural consequence of which will be, that the specie, which remains unexported, will be instantly locked up. With great esteem and regard, I am, &c.77

77. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To DAVID HUMPHREYS

Mount Vernon, February 18, 1787.

My dear Humphreys: Colo. Wadsworth handed me your obliging and much esteemed favor of the 20th. ulto., for which I offer you my sincere thanks.

The tranquil State in which this Commonwealth is, affords me nothing to offer you in return for the interesting communications in your letter of the above date. The house of Delegates in Maryland, have, on the Contrary, broke up in high dudgeon because the Senate would not agree to a paper emission, on loan. Both houses, it is said, have appealed to their Constituents; which may, eventually, produce a Lilliputian rebellion in that State. Thus we go on.

As you are near the theatre of more important transactions, and have the Wheels of the Political machine much more in view than I have, I hope you will not find it incompatible with your military [duties?] to allot a few moments, now and then, for the purpose of keeping me advised of their revolutions. My anxiety for the welfare of this Country increases with the attempts to destroy the peace of it. What is to be done is in every bodies mouth? Yet none can answer. Which is conviction to my mind that matters must get worse before they will be better.

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You have the good wishes of every one in this family, and the warmest affection of your Sincere friend.⁷⁸

To MRS. JAMES KIRK⁸⁰

Mount Vernon, February 20, 1787.

Madam: I must beg the favor of you to give the bearer (Mr Lear a young Gentleman who lives with me) a decided answer with respect to the money which is due to me from the Estate of Mr. Kirk your late husband, I wish it may not be forgotten that the Flour for which this money is due ought to have been paid on the delivery of it notwithstanding I have been kept out of it so long.

I beg leave to add that it is from the real want of it I make such frequent, and pressing applications. I am, etc.⁸¹

78. The text is from the *Washington-Humphreys* copies, in the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass., furnished through the kindness of R. W. G. Vail, librarian.

80. Of Alexandria, Va.

81. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PRESIDENT EZRA STILES

Mount Vernon, February 23, 1787.

Sir: I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th. instant⁸² and likewise one of the 9th. of November handed to me by the Revd. Mr. Morse⁸³ together with your election Sermon for which I beg you will accept of my best thanks.

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I am much obliged to you for the accounts which you gave me of the situation of affairs in Massachusetts, sincerely rejoice to find by that and other late advices, that the tumults in that State are likely to be soon suppressed that Government will again be established and peace and tranquility prevail. It must afford the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to every humane and feeling mind that there has been so little blood spilt in a contest which a few weeks ago threatened to drench the State of Massachusetts. I am, etc.⁸¹

82. In the *Washington Papers*. It has a roughly sketched map of the area of Shay's operations.

83. Rev. Jedidiah Morse, then a tutor in Yale.

81. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, February 24, 1787.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 24th. Ult^o. and receipt for Messrs. Josiah Watson and Co. bill of Exchange which was enclosed. I am much obliged to you for the account of the political situation of your State which you gave me, and am very happy to find by later advices that matters are likely soon to terminate entirely in favour of Government by the total suppression of the insurgents, and it adds much to the satisfaction which these accounts give that it may be effected with so little bloodshed, I hope some good will come out of so much evil, by giving energy and respectability to the Government.

General Lincoln's situation must have been very painful to be obliged to march against those men whom he had heretofore looked upon as his fellow Citizens and some of whom had perhaps been his companions in the field, but as they had by their repeated outrages forfeited all right to Citizenship, his duty and patriotism must have got the better of every other consideration and led him with alacrity to support the Government. I am, etc.⁸⁴

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84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On February 24 Washington wrote also to James Maury, of Liverpool, England, stating that he had "wholly discontinued the cultivation of Tobacco," but if he should have occasion to transact any mercantile business with Liverpool "I shall take the liberty of applying to you." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To JACQUES CAMPION

Mount Vernon, February 24, 1787.

Sir: Your letter of the 26th. of Jany. came duly to hand. I am much obliged to you for your good wishes, and interest which you take in my welfare. The Asses are in very good order, but I am sorry to inform you that the Gold cock and the Silver hen pheasant are dead, the others appear to be drooping, and I am afraid that all the care and attention which is paid to them will not be able to preserve them. I am, etc.⁸⁴

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, February 25, 1787.

Accept, my dear General Knox my affectionate thanks for your obliging favors of the 29th, 30th, and 31st. of Jany. and 1st. 8th. and 12th. of the present month. They were indeed, exceedingly satisfactory, and relieving to my mind which had been filled with great and anxious uneasiness for the issue of General Lincoln's operations, and the

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dignity of Government. On prospect of the happy termination of this insurrection I sincerely congratulate you; hoping that good may result from the cloud of evils which threatened, not only the hemisphere of Massachusetts but by spreading its baneful influence, the tranquillity of the Union. Surely Shays must be either a weak man, the dupe of some characters who are yet behind the curtain, or

has been deceived by his followers. Or which may be more likely, he did not conceive that there was energy enough in the Government to bring matters to the crisis to which they have been pushed. It is to be hoped the General Court of that State concurred in the report of the Committee, that a rebellion did actually exist. This would be decisive, and the most likely means of putting the finishing stroke to the business.

We have nothing new in this quarter except the dissensions which prevailed in, and occasioned the adjournment of, the Assembly of Maryland; that an appeal might be made to the people for their sentiments on the conduct of their representative in the Senate and Delegates respecting a paper omission; which was warmly advocated by the latter and opposed by the former, and which may be productive of great, and perhaps dangerous divisions. Our Affairs, generally, seem really, to be approaching to some awful crisis. God only knows what the result will be. It shall be my part to hope for the best; as to see this Country happy whilst I am gliding down the stream of life in tranquil retirement is so much the wish of my Soul, that nothing on this side Elysium can be placed in competition with it.

I hope the postponement of your journey to this State does not amount to a relinquishment of it, and that it is unnecessary to assure you of the sincere pleasure I should have at seeing you under this roof. Mrs. Washington unites with me in every good wish for Mrs. Knox yourself and family. With sentiments of the warmest friendship etc.

PS. I had wrote this letter and was on the point of sending it with others to the Post Office when your favor of the 15th. instt. was handed to me. The spirit and decision of the Court⁸⁵ is very pleasing and I hope will be attended with happy consequences.

Library of Congress

[MS.H.S.]

***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, March 8, 1787.

My dear Sir: Will you permit me to give you the trouble of making an indirect, but precise enquiry, into the alligations of the enclosed letters.⁸⁶ I flatter myself that from the vicinity of Elizabeth Town to New York, and the constant intercourse between the two, you will be able to do

85. Legislature.

86. From Chaunae, Comtesse d'Anterroches (or d'Anterroche). The comtesse wrote to Washington (September 18 and November 16). Both letters are in the *Washington Papers*, and in them she pleads for Washington to assist her son, formerly an ensign, 62d Foot, British Army. He had been taken prisoner at Saratoga, and when he learned of the French alliance, he joined the American cause. He was stated by Knox to be a relative of Lafayette.

it without much trouble. It is but little in my power to afford the pecuniary aids required by the writer; but if the facts as set forth be true, I should feel very happy in offering my mite, and rendering any services in my power on the occasion. Be so good, when you write to me on this subject, to return the letters and translations.

The observations contained in your letter of the 22d. Ult^o. (which came duly to hand) respecting the disfranchisement of a number of the Citizens of Massachusetts for their rebellious conduct may be just; and yet, without exemplary punishment, similar disorders may be excited by other ambitious and discontented characters. Punishments however ought to light on the principals.

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I am glad to hear that Congress are about to remove some of the stumbling blocks which lay in the way of the proposed Convention; a Convention is an expedient I wish to see tried; after which, if the present government is not efficient, conviction of the propriety of a change of it, will disseminate through every rank, and class of people and may be brought about in place; till which however necessary it may appear in the eyes of the more discerning, my opinion is, that it cannot be effected without great contention, and much confusion. It is among the

evils, and perhaps is not the smallest, of democratical governments, that the people must *feel*, before they will see. When this happens, they are roused to action; hence it is that this form of governments is so slow. I am indirectly and delicately pressed to attend this convention.⁸⁷ Several reasons are opposed to it in my mind, and not the least my having declined attending the General Meeting of the Cincinnati, which is to be holden in Philadelphia, at the same time on account of the disrespect it might *seem* to offer to that Society, to be there on another occasion. A thought however has lately run through my mind, which is attended with embarrassment. It is, wheather my non-attendance in this Convention will not be considered as deriliction to republicanism, nay more, whether other motives may not (however injuriously) be ascribed to me for not exerting myself on this occasion in support of it. Under these circumstances let me pray you, my dear Sir, to inform me confidentially what the public expectation is on this head, that is, whether I will, or ought to be there? You are much in the way of obtaining this knowledge, and I can depend upon your friendship, candour, and judgment in the communication of it, as far as it shall appear to you. My final determination (if what I have already given to the Executive of this State is not considered in that light) cannot be delayed beyond the time necessary for your reply. With great truth etc.⁸⁸

[N.Y.P.L.]

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87. Knox's letters to Washington (Feb. 27 and Mar. 19, 1787) on the subject of Washington attending the convention are in the *Washington Papers*.

88. Knox's answer (April 9) stated: "It is the general wish that you should attend. It is conceived to be highly important to the success of the propositions of the Convention," Knox's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

To DAVID HUMPHREYS

Mount Vernon March 8, 1787.

My dear Humphreys: Colo. Wadsworth, as I informed you in my last, presented me your obliging favor of the 20th of January and the Post since has handed me the subsequent one of the 11th Ult.

My sentiments, respecting the inexpediency of my attending the proposed Convention of the States in Philadelphia remain the same as when I wrote you last, tho' Congress I am informed are about to remove one of the objections by their recommendation of this Convention I am still indirectly and delicately pressed by many to attend this meeting; and a thought has run thro' my mind of late attended with more embarrassment than any former one. It is whether my not doing it will not be considered as an implied dereliction to Republicanism. nay more, whether (however injurious the imputation) it may not be ascribed to other motives. My wish is I confess to see this Convention tried; after which if the present form is not made efficient, conviction of the propriety of a change will pervade all ranks, and many [may] be effected by peace. Till then, however necessary it may appear to the more

discerning part of the community, my opinion is, that it cannot be accomplished without great contention and much confusion

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for reasons too obvious to enumerate. It is one of the evils, perhaps not the smallest, of democratical governments that the People must feel before they will see or act. Under this view of matters, and not doubting but you have heard the sentiments of many respectable characters since the date of your letter of the 20th of Jany. on this subject and perhaps since the business has been moved in Congress, of the propriety or impropriety of my attendance let me pray you, my dear Sir, to give me confidentially the public opinion and expectation as far as it has come to your knowledge of what it is supposed, I will or ought to do on this occasion. You will readily see the necessity of my receiving it soon, if it is to have an operation contrary to the former, because [if] my communications to the executive of this State are not considered as definitive, I must make these so shortly.

I congratulate you on the favourable Issue to the exertion of the Government of Massachusetts to quell the insurrection which at one period assumed an appearance of being formidable. you have the best wishes of everyone in this family; possess the sincere regard and Friendship of Dr. Sir yr. etc.⁸⁹

89. This letter has been so carelessly recorded in the "Letter Book" that it is almost impossible to be sure of the sense. It seems certain that several words, perhaps an entire line, has been omitted. Humphreys's letters to Washington (Mar. 24 and Apr. 9, 1787) on the subject of Washington attending the convention are in the *Washington Papers*.

To PRESIDENT JOSEPH WILLARD⁹⁰

Mount Vernon, March 10, 1787.

Revd. Sir: Permit me to entreat, that my long delay in acknowledging the receipt of your polite letter of the 15th. of May last, may be ascribed to any cause rather than the want of respect for your character, and gratitude for the favourable sentiments you have expressed of me. As the letter was introductory of Mr. Lear, I found myself inclined, though disposed to give full credence to your acct. of the talents and good disposition of this

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young Gentleman, to take time, and seek occasions, to form my own judgement of him; and it is with pleasure I now assure you that, his deportment since he came into this family has been such, as to obtain the esteem, confidence, and love of every individual in it. As (from the interest you have taken in his welfare) I persuade myself this testimony of my approbation of his conduct will not be displeasing to you, I could no longer with-hold it; especially as it affords an occasion of assuring you of my good wishes for the University over wch. you preside, and of the esteem and respect with which I have the honor etc.⁹¹

90. Of Harvard College.

91. The text, from the *Yale Review* (spring of 1932), kindly furnished by Judge E. A. Armstrong, varies in minor verbal details from the "Letter Book" copy. Practically this same letter was also sent (March 10) to Rev. Samuel Haven and John Langdon. Copies of these letters are in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS CUSHING

Mount Vernon, March 10, 1787.

Sir: By your letter and account of the 22d. of February 1786, there appears a balance in my favor of fifteen pounds thirteen shillings Lawful money, [for] which I take the liberty to draw a bill in favor of Mr. Thomas Porter of Alexandria payable ten days after sight.

I am happy to find by the last Accounts from the Northward that the disturbances in your State were almost totally suppressed, and hope before this, that peace and good order are again restored, Mrs. Washington joins me in my best wishes for Mrs. Cushing and yourself. I am, etc.⁹²

92. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM

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Mount Vernon, March 10, 1787.

Dear Sir: I shall not wonder if you should be surprized at my not acknowledging the receipts of your esteemed favor of the 12th. of last August at an earlier period. Immediately after it came to my hands, not knowing what you had written to Doct. Franklin or to Mr. Jay, or what steps might have been taken on the subject matter thereof by either or both of those Gentlemen I wrote to the former for information; giving assurances of my disposition to carry your wishes into full effect if there were not impediments in the way which could not, consistently, be surmounted. I waited from that period (early in November) till February in daily expectation of an answer; but receiving none, I addressed (supposing my first letter must have miscarried) a duplicate to the Doctrs. and receiving the answer which is enclosed.⁹³

Though I had heard of the resolution alluded to in Mr. Jay's Letter to the Doctors previous to my writing to him yet I was willing to know the truth, and to see how far Congress would think it right to adhere to the policy of their resolution.

I beg leave to make a

⁹³. No copy is now found in the *Washington Papers*.

tender of my best wishes to Lady Newenham, in which Mrs. Washington joins, and assurances of the respect and esteem with which I have the honor, etc.⁹⁴

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, March 10, 1787.

Dear Sir: I stand indebted to you for two letters. The first, introductory of Mr. Anstey, needed no apology, nor will any be necessary on future similar occasions. The other of the 7th of January is on a very interesting subject deserving very particular attention.

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How far the revision of the federal system, and giving more adequate powers to Congress may be productive of an efficient government, I will not under my present view of the matter, presume to decide. That many inconveniences result from the present form, none can deny. Those enumerated in your letter

94. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

are so obvious and sensibly felt that no logic can controvert, nor is it likely that any change of conduct will remove them, and that attempts to alter or amend it will be like the proppings of a house which is ready to fall, and which no shoars can support (as many seem to think) may also be true. But, is the public mind matured for such an important change as the one you have suggested? What would be the consequences of a premature attempt? My opinion is, that this Country must yet feel and see more, before it can be accomplished.

A thirst for power, and *the bantling*, *I had liked to have said monster*, for sovereignty, which have taken such fast hold of the States individually, will when joined by the many whose personal consequence in the control of State politics will in a manner be annihilated, form a strong phalanx against it; and when to these the few who can hold posts of honor or profit in the National Government are compared with the many who will see but little prospect of being noticed, and the discontent of others who may look for appointments, the opposition will be altogether irresistable till the mass, as well as the more discerning part of the Community shall see the necessity. Among men of reflection, few

will be found I believe, who are not *beginning* to think that our system is more perfect in theory than in practice; and that notwithstanding the boasted virtue of America it is more than probable we shall exhibit the last melancholy proof, that mankind are not competent to their own Government without the means of coercion in the Sovereign.

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Yet, I would fain try what the wisdom of the proposed Convention will suggest: and what can be effected by their Councils. It may be the last peaceable mode of essaying the practicability of the present form, without a greater lapse of time than the exigency of our affairs will allow. In strict propriety a Convention so holden may not be legal. Congress, however, may give it a colouring by recommendation, which would fit it more to the taste without proceeding to a definition of the powers. This however constitutionally it might be done would not, in my opinion, be expedient: for delicacy on the one hand, and Jealousy on the other, would produce a mere nihil.

My name is in the delegation to this Convention; but it was put there contrary to my desire, and remains contrary to my request. Several reasons at the time of this appointment and which yet exist, conspired to make an attendance inconvenient, perhaps improper, tho' a good deal urged to it. with sentiments of great regard &c.

P.S. Since writing this letter I have seen the resolution of Congress recommendatory of the Convention to be holden in Philadelphia the 2d Monday in May.95

To THE GOVERNOR OF THE BAHAMA ISLANDS

Mount Vernon, March 11, 1787.

Sir: With your Excellencys permission, though I have not the honor of being known to you, I will take the liberty of recommending the bearer Mr. Fendall, his Lady, and Miss Lee, to your Civilities. They are much respected and esteemed in this Country. The Ill health of Mrs. Fendall have induced her Physicians to recommend the air of the Sea to her, and the Bahama Islands seem to be the object of their Voyage. I am persuaded these worthy people will do Justice to my recommendation that a philanthropic attention to them will be as pleasing to yourself

95. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Library of Congress

as to them; and that it will be the best apology I can offer for this freedom. I have the honor, etc.⁹⁶

To CHARLES WILLSON PEALE

Mount Vernon, March 13, 1787.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 27th Ultmo. acknowledging the reception of the body of the Golden Pheasant.⁹⁷ I have sent by the Dolphin Captn. Steward the body of a French hen Pheasant which died this day. I chose this mode of conveying it rather than by the Stage, as the Packet calls here to receive some things for Philadelphia; and I think, all circumstances considered, that it will meet with as quick and safe a conveyance as if it went by land. I wish you great success in the Mezzotinto Prints which you have undertaken,⁹⁸ and have no doubt but your abilities in works of Genius will ensure it. I am etc.⁹⁹

96. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On March 12 Washington wrote briefly to William Goddard, requesting the insertion of an advertisement in his paper (*The Maryland Journal*) for three weeks. This was a notice that Royal Gift and The Knight of Malta would cover at Mount Vernon during the spring of 1787, at five guineas for the season, and Magnolio would cover for £4; good pasturage would be furnished at one-half a dollar per week. John Fairfax signed the advertisement as overseer. A copy of this letter is in the Toner Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

97. Peale stuffed the pheasants and exhibited them in his "Museum."

98. A broadside advertisement of one of his mezzotints, an allegorical picture of William Pitt, is among the undated Pennsylvania broadsides in the Library of Congress.

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99. In the writing of Tobias Lear, From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N.J.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, March 14, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your letters of the 20th. and 27th. Ult. are both before me. The Barley and other thing by the Dolphin are arrived, and by the return of this Vessel I consign you, as per bill enclosed, 45 Barrls. of Herrings, which you will be pleased to dispose of to the best advantage, and place the proceeds to my credit. It is hardly necessary to add that, the sooner these fish are disposed of the higher the Sale of them probably will be, as the season for the new is near at hand. They are very good I am told, having been lately examined.

As I believe the half yearly interest of my Certificate is nearly due, and a small balance was in my favor previous to the purchasing the Articles by the Dolphin, I will wait for the Sale of the Fish to know how the Accts. between us will then be. In the interim, please to send me one doz. of the best corn Scythes of a proper length, and strength at the heel, and in the backs, and the same number of the best Grass Scythes, two strong bramble Scythes; and two flax spinning wheels. The Dolphin returns to this Port in the course of next month, and will afford a good Conveyance. What does the best Hyson

Tea, and dble. refined Sugar sell at with you? And how are linnens now? particularly those of the finer sort. With great esteem I am etc.

PS. How does White and red Lead, ground in Oil sell? are not these things often bought cheap at the Public Vendues?1

[H.S.P.]

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To JAMES MERCER

Mount Vernon, March 15, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 10th. came duly to hand, and with very sincere concern I read the acct. of your ill health; but if your other complaints have left you, the Asthma, though troublesome and distressing, is not a dangerous one; I will hope therefore that the agreeable season which is fast approaching, will perfectly restore you good health.

Under cover with this, you will receive the original Deed for the Lands on four miles run; which you will please to return when your purposes are answered by the reference to it, for drawing the deed of confirmation:

1. In the writing of Tobias Lear. The P.S. is in the writing of Washington.

for your justice in offering which, and kindness in drawing it, I pray you to accept my warmest acknowledgments.

The mode suggested by you to obtain the bond which I passed to Messrs. McCoull & Blair, is, in my judgment, the *only* proper one; so far as it respects you, or the Representatives of your father (if the credit is to be applied to that acct.) it is precisely the same whether you acct. with me, or them, for the principal and interest of the sum which was to have been paid for the Land under the circumstances of your claim; because if the right is determined to be in you, so much will have been discounted from my demand on the Estate. If in them, it is only paying to them, as Attorneys of Lindo and Cozenove² what otherwise would have been demanded of me. The case with me would be widely different, for if I allow this sum with interest in a settlement and my bond remains unretired, I am open to a prosecution thereon; and may be greatly distressed by the actual payment after having allowed it in a discount, before I could have any redress, which would very illy accord with the present

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State of my finances. Should Mr. McCoull³ refuse to accede to your proposal, it would imply strongly, his intention of resorting to me for payment.⁴

However desirous I am, and

2. Elias Lindo and John H. Casanove.

3. Neil McCoul.

4. The chain of title of this Four Mile Run land and much valuable information respecting it will be found in Charles W. Stetson's privately printed volume, *Four Mile Run Grants* (Mimeoform Press: Washington, D.C., 1935).

always shall be, to comply with any commands of my Country, I do not conceive that I can, with consistent conduct, attend the proposed Convention to be holden in Philadelphia in May next. For besides the declaration which I made in a very solemn manner when I was about to retire, of bidding adieu to all public employment; I had just before the appointment of delegates to this Convention, written and dispatched circular letters to the several State Societies of the Cincinnati informing them of my intention not to attend the General Meeting which was to take place about the same time and at the same City. and assigned reasons which apply as forcibly in the one case as the other. Under these circumstances, to attend the Convention might be considered disrespectful to a worthy set of men for whose attachment and support on many trying occasions, I shall ever feel the highest gratitude and affection.

It is unnecessary I hope to assure you of the pleasure I shall always receive at seeing you here, whenever business or your health will permit. The latter, possibly, might be benefitted by the change of Air. With sincere esteem and Regd. etc.⁵

5. From a copy, kindly furnished by Francis A. Foster, of the original letter owned by Maj. Gen. Preston Brown, United States Army, retired, of Vineyard Haven, Mass.

To GENERAL BENJAMIN LINCOLN6

Mount Vernon, March 23, 1787.

My Dear Sir: Ever since the disorders in your State began to grow serious I have been peculiarly anxious to hear from that quarter; General Knox has from time to time transmitted to me the state of affairs as they came to his hands; but nothing has given such full and satisfactory information as the particular detail of events which you have been so good as to favor me with, and for which you will please to accept my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments. Permit me also, my dear Sir, to offer you my sincerest congratulations upon your success. The suppression of those tumults and insurrections with so little bloodshed, is an event as happy as it was unexpected; it must have been peculiarly agreeable to you, being placed in so delicate and critical a situation. I am extremely happy to find that your sentiments upon the disfranchising act are such as they are; upon my first seeing it, I formed an opinion perfectly coincident with yours, vizt., that measures more generally lenient might have produced equally as good an effect without entirely alienating the affections of the people from the government; as it now stands, it

6. In command of State troops for suppressing Shay's rebellion.

affects a large body of men, some of them, perhaps, it deprives of the means of gaining a livelihood; the friends and connections of those people will feel themselves wounded in a degree, and I think it will rob the State of a number of its inhabitants, if it produces nothing worse.

It gives me great pleasure to hear that your Eastern settlements succeeds so well the sincere regard which I have for you will always make your prosperity a part of my happiness. I am etc.7

7. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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On March 23 Washington wrote to John Parke, of Delaware, thanking him for his poetical works and “The Honor which you have done me in dedicating your book to me....I always wish to give every possible encouragement to those works of Genius which are the production of an American.”

On this same day (March 23) Washington wrote also to Matthew McConnell, thanking him for his *Essay on the Domestic Debts of the United States*. Copies of both of these letters are in the “Letter Book” in the *Washington Papers*.

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, March 25, 1787.

My Dear Marquis: Since writing you a hasty letter in November last, by a vessel which was then passing my door, I have been honored with your kind and obliging favor of the 26th of October; for the affectionate sentiments with which it is replete I pray you to accept my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments and the strongest assurances of everlasting friendship.

I am writing to you my Dear Sir but where will the letter find you? In Crimea, Constantinople, or the Archipelago? or will it await your return to Paris? About this time you must according to your account be setting out for the first, to make the tour of the latter. If it should get to your hands, before or during the interview you will have with her imperial majesty⁹ it will afford you an opportunity of informing her personally, that the request she made to you for obtaining an Indian Vocabulary is in a proper train for execution. I have the strongest assurances from both General Butler who is now superintendent of Indian affairs and residing on the Ohio, and Mr. Hutchins the Geographer who is also employed in that Country that they will delay no time nor spare any pains to make it as perfect as they can. As soon as

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9. Empress Catherine the Great, of Russia.

I receive, I will forward it to you.

I fear this long trip will be the means of postponing your visit to this Country to the very great regret of all your friends and particularly so to me who would wish to see you once more before I go in search of Elysium. You will long ere this have heard of the Insurrection in the State of Massachusetts; to trace the causes would be difficult, and to detail their progress would be unnecessary as the steps taken by that government and the proceedings generally are very minutely related in the public gazettes with which I am informed you are regularly supplied. I shall therefore proceed to the more pleasing part of the business and inform you that the tumults are at an end and the principals fled to Canada. It is apprehended however that an act of the Legislature disfranchising those who were aiding or abetting, is pregnant with as much evil as good, as the operation is too extensive.

These disorders are evident marks of a defective government; indeed the thinking part of the people of this Country are now so well satisfied of this fact that most of the Legislatures have appointed, and the rest it is said will appoint, delegates to meet at Philadelphia on the second Monday

in May next in a general Convention of the States to revise and correct the defects of the federal System. Congress have also recognised, and recommended the measure. What may be the result of this meeting is hardly within the scan of human wisdom to predict. It is considered however as the last essay to support the present form.

Your endeavors my dear Marquis to serve this Country are unremitted, the letter from the Minister to Mr. Jefferson (who I am happy to find is so much respected and esteem'd at the Court of France), which you had the goodness to send me, is a recent instance of it. and I

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wish the conduct of the States may entitle them to a continuation of your good offices as I also do that the Protestants may be grateful for the reliefs you have afforded them.

The Dutch, though a phlegmatic people, have been too long quarrelling to come now to blows and if matters there can be settled without it the probability is that the tranquillity of Europe may be of some continuance unless the disagreement between the Russians and Turks should become more serious. It seems almost nugatory to dispute about the best mode of dealing with the Algerines, when we have neither money to buy their friendship nor the means of punishing them for their depredations upon our people and trade. If we could command

the latter I should be clearly in sentiment with you and Mr. Jefferson, that chastisement would be more honorable, and much to be preferred to the purchased friendship of these Barbarians. By me, who perhaps do not understand the policy by which the Maritime powers are actuated it has ever been considered as reflecting the highest disgrace on them to become tributary to such banditti, who might for half the sum that is paid them be exterminated from the Earth.

This want must turn our faces from the Western Posts, even should it be found that we have not been the first infractors of the Treaty. To investigate this matter, as there have been crimination on both sides, the Secretary for Foreign affairs is now employed.

General Greenes death is an event which has given so much general concern and is so much regretted by his numerous friends that I can scarce persuade myself to touch upon it even so far as to say that in him you lost a man who affectionately regarded and was a sincere admirer of you. Tho' last mentioned, it is among my uppermost thoughts to thank you once more, my dear Marquis for the valuable animals you sent me

under the care of Mr. Champion and to request my dear friend that you will let me know the cost of them that I may remit the amount for be assured I have had it in contemplation to give you more than the trouble of procuring them. I have lately lost a Brother (Colo. John

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Augt. Washington which I mention to account for the black Seal of this letter) the rest of my friends, and every individual in the Family axe tolerably well and join most cordially in every vow that can contribute to the health and happiness of Madam La Fayette yourself and family. Esqr Tab10 will soon be able to offer you his own homage as he begins to write very prettily. I have no expression that can convey to you the warmth of my friendship and affectionate attachment. Adieu.

P.S. Mr Campion observing that red birds were not among the feathered tribe of France, and the wood or summer duck were very rare there I send you two pair of the latter and several of the former which Capt. Atkinson who is bound for Havre de gras has promised his care of.¹¹

10. George Washington Parke Custis (?).

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On March 30 Washington wrote out the following memorandum, or certificate, at Mount Vernon: "On Monday the 12th. day of Septr. 1785. A Mr. Caywood, or some person in his behalf, presented an Acct. of Taxes, or the claims of the public for some Land I have in Charles County Maryland, which was the first application ever made to me, for the same. Whether previously, or subsequent to, that period any demand was ever made of Mr. Lund Washington who had charge of my business tilt the close of that year for them is more than I can determine, but, no doubt, can be resolved by him." The original of this memorandum is in the *Washington Papers*.

***To GOVERNOR EDMUND RANDOLPH**

Mount Vernon, March 28, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 11th. did not come to my hand till the 24th; and since then, till now, I have been too much indisposed to acknowledge the receipt of it.

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To what cause to ascribe the detention of the [letter] I know not, as I never omit sending once, and oftener twice a week to the Post Office in Alexandria. It was the decided intention of the letter I had the honor of writing to your Excellency the 21st. of December last, to inform you, that it would not be convenient for me to attend the Convention proposed to be holden in Philadelphia in May next; and I had entertained hopes that another had been, or soon would be, appointed in my place; inasmuch as it is not only inconvenient for me to leave home, but because there will be, I apprehend, too much cause to charge my conduct with inconsistency, in again appearing on a public theatre after a public declaration to the contrary; and because it will, I fear, have a tendency to sweep me back into the tide of public affairs, when retirement and

ease is so essentially necessary for, and is so much desired by me.

However, as my friends, with a degree of sollicitude which is unusual, seem to wish for my attendance on this occasion, I have come to a resolution to go, if my health will permit, provided, from the lapse of time between the date of your Excellency's letter and this reply, the Executive may not, the reverse of which wd. be highly pleasing to me, have turned its thoughts to some other character; for independantly of all other considerations, I have, of late, been so much afflicted with a rheumatic complaint in my shoulder that at times I am hardly able to raise my hand to my head, or turn myself in bed. This, consequently, might prevent my attendance, and eventually a representation of the State; which wd. afflict me more sensibly than the disorder that occasioned it.

If after the expression of these sentiments, the Executive should consider me as one of the Delegates, I would thank your Excellency for the earliest advice of it; because, if I am able, and should go to Philadelpa., I shall have some previous arrangements to make, and would set off for that place the first, or second day of May, that I may be there in time to account, personally, for my conduct to the General Meeting of the Cincinnati

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which is to convene on the first Monday of that month. My feelings would be much hurt if that body should otherwise, ascribe my attendance on the one, and not on the other occasion, to a disrespectful inattention to the Society; when the fact is, that I shall ever retain the most lively and affectionate regard for the members of which it is composed, on acct. of their attachment to, and uniform support of me, upon many trying occasions; as well as on acct. of their public virtues, patriotism, and sufferings.

I hope your Excellency will be found among the *attending* delegates. I should be glad to be informed who the others are; and cannot conclude without once more, and in emphatical terms, praying that if there is not a *decided* representation in *prospect*, without me, that another, for the reason I have assigned, may be chosen in my room without ceremony and without delay; for it would be unfortunate indeed if the State which was the mover of this Convention, should be unrepresented in it. With great respect I have the honor etc.

[H.S.P.]

***To JAMES MADISON**

Mount Vernon, March 31, 1787.

My Dear Sir: At the sametime that I acknowledge the receipt of your obliging favor of the 21st. ult. from New York I promise to avail myself of your indulgence of writing only when it is convenient to me. If this should not occasion a relaxation on your part, I shall become very much your debtor, and possibly like others in similar circumstances (when the debt is burthensome) may feel a disposition to apply the sponge, or, what is nearly a-kin to it, pay you off in depreciated paper, which being a legal tender, or what is tantamount, being *that or nothing*, you cannot refuse. You will receive the nominal value, and that you know quiets the conscience, and makes all things easy, with the debtor.

I am glad to find that Congress have recommended to the States to appear in the Convention proposed to be holden in Philadelphia in May. I think the reasons in favor,

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have the preponderancy of those against the measure. It is idle in my opinion to suppose that the Sovereign can be insensible of the inadequacy of the powers under which it acts, and that seeing, it should not recommend a revision of the Fœderal system when it is considered by many as the

only Constitutional mode by which the defects can be remedied. Had Congress proceeded to a delineation of the Powers, it might have sounded an Alarm; but as the case is, I do not conceive that it will have that effect.¹²

From the acknowledged abilities of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I could have had no doubt of his having ably investigated the infractions of the Treaty on both sides. Much is it to be regretted however, that there should have been any on ours. We seem to have forgotten, or never to have learnt, the policy of placing ones enemy in the wrong. Had we observed good faith on our part, we might have told our tale to the world with a good grace; but complts. illy become those who are found to be the first agressors.

I am fully of opinion that those who lean to a Monarchial governmt. have either not consulted the public mind, or that they live in a region where the levelling principles in which they were bred, being entirely irradiated, is much more productive of Monarchical ideas than are to be found in the Southern States, where, from the habitual distinctions which have always existed among the people, one would have expected the first generation, and the most rapid growth of them. I also am

12. On Feb. 21, 1787, Congress had resolved that it was expedient that a convention of delegates from the several States be held at Philadelphia on the second Monday of May next “for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation and reporting to Congress and the several legislatures such alterations and provisions therein as shall...render the federal Constitution adequate to the exigencies of Government and the preservation of the Union.”

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clear, that even admitting the utility; nay necessity of the form, yet that the period is not arrived for adopting the change without shaking the Peace of this Country to its foundation. That a thorough reform of the present system is indispensable, none who have capacities to judge will deny; and with hand (and heart) I hope the business will be essayed in a full Convention. After which, if more powers, and more decision is not found in the existing form. If it still wants energy and that secrecy and dispatch (either from the nonattendance, or the local views of its members) which is characteristick of good Government. And if it shall be found (the contrary of which however I have always been more afrd. of, than of the abuse of them) that Congress will upon all proper occasions exercise the powers with a firm and steady hand, instead of frittering them back to the Individual States where the members in place of viewing themselves in their National character, are too apt to be looking. I say after this essay is made if the system proves inefficient, conviction of the necessity of a change will be dissiminated among all classes of the People. Then, and not till then, in my opinion can it be attempted without involving all the evils of civil discord.

I confess however that my opinion of public virtue is so far changed that I have my doubts whether any system without the means of coercion in

the Sovereign, will enforce Obedience to the Ordinances of a Genl. Government; without which, every thing else fails. Laws or Ordinances unobserved, or partially attended to, had better never have been made; because the first is a mere nihil, and the 2d. is productive of much jealousy and discontent. But the kind of coercion you may ask? This indeed will require thought; though the non-compliance of the States with the late requisition, is an evidence of the necessity. It is somewhat singular that a State (New York) which used to be foremost in all fœderal measures, should now turn her face against them in almost every instance.

I fear the State of Massachusetts have exceeded the bounds of good policy in its disfranchisements; punishment is certainly due to the disturbers of a government, but the operations of this Act is too extensive. It embraces too much, and probably may give birth

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to new instead of destroying the old leven. Some Acts passed at the last Session of our Assembly respecting the trade of this Country, has given great, and general discontent to the Merchants of it. An application from the whole body of those at Norfolk has been made, I am told, to convene the assembly.

I had written thus far, and was on the point of telling you how much I am your obliged Servant, when your favor of the 18th. calls upon me for additional acknowledgments. I thank you for the Indian Vocabulary which I dare say will be very acceptable in a general comparison. Having taken a copy, I return you the original with thanks.

It gives me great pleasure to hear that there is a probability of a full representation of the States in Convention; but if the delegates come to it under fetters, the salutary ends proposed will in my opinion be greatly embarrassed and retarded, if not altogether defeated. I am anxious to know how this matter really is, as my wish is, that the Convention may adopt no temporizing expedient, but probe the defects of the Constitution to the bottom, and provide radical cures; whether they are agreed to or not; a conduct like this, will stamp wisdom and dignity on the proceedings, and be looked to as a luminary, which sooner or later will shed its influence.

I should feel pleasure, I confess, in hearing that Vermont is received into the Union upon terms agreeable to all parties. I took the liberty years ago to tell some of the first characters in the State of New York, that

sooner or later it would come to that. That the longer it was delayed the terms on their part, would, probably be more difficult; and that the general interest was suffering by the suspence in which the business was held; as the asylem wch. it afforded, was a constant drain from the Army in place of an aid which it offered to afford. and lastly, considering the proximity of it to Canada if they were not with us, they might become a sore thorn in our sides, wch. I verily believe would have been the case if the war had continued.

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The Western Settlements without good and wise management of them, may be equally troublesome.

With sentiments of the sincerest friendship &c. Be so good as to forward the enclosed. Mrs. Washington intended to have sent it by Colo. Carrington, but he did not call here.

[N.Y.P.L.]

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, April 1, 1787.

Sir: Enclosed I return the letter which you forwarded to me the 10th. of Feby. For particular reasons and purposes, whatever Money you may incline to pay me consequent of your promises would come very opportunely before the 25th of this month. To this period, sufficient time is allowed to obtain the Certificates you have at Richmond, after which I shall hold myself discharged from any obligation to receive them.

The detention has already deprived me of every advantage I could have made of them in the payment of Taxes whilst I am sustaining the loss by their depreciation in the hands of others. My Compliments if you please to Mrs. Mercer. I am, etc.13

13. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, April 2, 1787.

My dear Sir: The early attention which you were so obliging as to pay to my letter of the 8th ulto. is highly pleasing and flattering to me. Were you to continue to give me information on the same point, you would add to the favor; as I see, or think I see, reasons for and against my attendance in Convention so near an equilibrium, as will cause me to

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Determine upon either, with diffidence. One of the reasons against it, is, an apprehension that all the States will not appear; and that some of them, being unwillingly drawn into the measure, will send their Delegates so lettered as to embarrass, and perhaps render nugatory, the whole proceedings. In either of these circumstances, that is, a partial representation, or cramped powers, I should not like to be a sharer in this business. If the Delegates come with such powers as will enable the Convention to probe the defects of the Constitution to the bottom, and point out radical cures, it would be an honorable employment; but otherwise it is desirable to avoid it, and these are matters

you may possibly come at by means of your acquaintances among the Delegates in Congress, who, undoubtedly know what powers are given by their respective States. You also can inform me what is the prevailing opinion with respect to my attendance, or non-attendance, is; and I would sincerely thank you for the confidential communication of it.

If I should attend the Convention, I will be in Philadelphia previous to the meeting of the Cincinnati, where I shall hope, and expect to meet you and some others of my particular friends the day before; in order that I may have a free and unreserved conference with you on the subject of it; for I assure you this is in my estimation, a business of a delicate nature.

That the design of the Institution was pure, I have not a particle of doubt. That it may be so still, is perhaps equally unquestionable. But, quære, are not the subsidence of the Jealousies of it, to be ascribed to the modification which took place at the last Genl. Meeting? Are not these rejected in toto by some of the State Societies, and partially acceded to by others? Has any State so far overcome its prejudices as to grant a Charter? Will the modifications and alterations be insisted on, or given up, in the next Meeting? If the first, will it not

occasion warmth and divisions? If the latter, and I should remain at the head of this order, in what light would my signature appear in contradictory recommendations? In what light

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would the versatility appear to the Foreign members, who perhaps are acting agreeably to the recommendations of the last General Meeting?

These, and other matters which may be agitated, will, I fear, place me in a disagreeable predicament if I should preside, and were among the causes which induced me to decline the honor of it, previously to the meeting. Indeed my health is become very precarious. A Rheumatic complaint which has followed me more than Six months is frequently so bad, that it is with difficulty I can, at times, raise my hand to my head, or turn myself in bed. This, however smooth and agreeable other matters might be, might almost in the moment of my departure, prevent my attendance on either occasion. I will not at present touch upon any other parts of your letter, but would wish you to ponder on all these matters, and write to me as soon as you can.

With the most sincere friendship etc.

[MS.H.S.]

To JOHN RUMNEY

Mount Vernon, April 6, 1787.

Sir: However desirous I may be of accomodating the wishes of so deserving a Lady as you represent Mrs. Wilson to be, yet Mrs. Washington concurs in sentiment with me that my family already is, and soon will be too large to admit of an increase.

I can say little more at this time respecting the Estate of the deceased Colo. Thos. Colvill than what is contained in my account of it to Major Swan (recited in one of the letters which you put into my hands) except that I have used every means in my power lately to Collect materials (and very defective indeed they are) for a final settlement of the Administration.

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What the surplus of the estate will be, when the debts and Legacies are all paid, is more than I can inform you, the Testator himself, as will appear by his will, had a doubt of their being *any* , and what will be done with *it* , if there should, must be a matter for future determination, when the Administration is closed, which it is my sincere wish to do so as fast as the nature of the case will admit, I shall for my own justification, and security, take Council with respect to the

application of the surplus, if any, under the existing Laws of this Country. The author of the letters of Instruction to you is mistaken I conceive when he says the claim of one Clowson was admitted, unless by admission he means that it was received. If this was not his idea, it will give him no pleasure to be informed that near twenty others, I believe, have been admitted in the same way under the indefinite, and I might add, indigested clause of the will which has stirred up so many pretenders as to render it a matter of difficult investigation to determine rightly in the case. With great esteem and regard, I am, etc.15

15. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To HENRY EMANUEL LUTTERLOH

Mount Vernon, April 8, 1787.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 3d. of Jany. containing a proposition of the delivery of several hundred German families to settle some of those large tracts of unimproved Land in this State.

I cannot, as an individual, do any thing, at present, towards promoting your design having no occasion for people of the description mentioned in your letter except a few Mechanics, which I should be glad to procure; upon advantageous terms but as a member of a Company owning a tract of land known by the name of the Great Dismal Swamp. I can inform you that I know it is their wish and desire to have it settled. It lies in the Neighbourhood of Norfolk, contains of that which is patented besides Entries about

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40,000. Acres, and is capable of being made as valuable a tract of Land as any in the Country, as well on account of its vicinity to Norfolk Portsmouth and Suffolk and the State of North Carolina as its lying in such a situation as to have the Canal, which it is in contemplation to open between Albemarle sound and Elizabeth R: run directly through it and which will greatly facilitate the drawing of it. But the Company are so dispersed

and, in a manner, inattentive to the business, that I am pretty certain they would not be brought to advance any money or incur any expence in settling it further than to give such a proportion of the Land as shall be to the mutual satisfaction of the parties, what this proportion would be I am not able to say, tho I have no reason to doubt but that it would be highly advantageous to the Settlers. I should think however, if you incline to enter upon this business, it would be best for you to view the land, that you might form an opinion of the proportion which it would be proper to give, and make your proposals accordingly. I would in that case use every endeavor to convince the Company that an agreement might be entered into. I conceive a proper introduction of those industrious people would be highly beneficial to this Country, and shall be happy to give you any assistance in my power towards the effecting of your plan. With very great esteem etc.16

16. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To GOVERNOR EDMUND RANDOLPH

Mount Vernon, April 9, 1787.

My dear Sir: In reply to your favor of the 2d. I have to request that you will not be at the trouble of forwarding any money to me from the treasury.

If I should attend the Service, it will suit me as well to receive it from you in Philadelphia as at this place. If I should not, I have no business with it at all.

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It gives me pleasure to find by your letter that there will be so full a representation from this State. If the case had been otherwise I would in emphatical terms have urged again that, rather than depend upon my going, another might be chosen in my place; for as a friend, and in confidence, I declare to you that my assent is given contrary to my judgment, because the act will, I apprehend, be considered as inconsistent with my public declaration delivered in a solemn manner at an interesting æra of my life, never more to intermeddle in public matters. This declaration not only stands on the files of Congress, but is I believe registered in almost all the Gazettes and magazines that are published, and what adds to the embarrassment

is, I had previous to my appointment, informed by circular letter the several State Societies of the Cincinnati of my intention to decline the Presidency of that order and excuse myself from attending the next General meeting at Philadelphia on the first Monday in May, assigning reasons for so doing which apply as well in the one case as the other. Add to these, I very much fear that all the States will not appear in Convention, and that some of them will come fettered so as to impede rather than accelerate the great object of their convening which, under the peculiar circumstances of my case, would place me in a more disagreeable Situation than any other Member would stand in. As I have yielded however to what appeared to be the earnest wishes of my friends, I will hope for the best; and can assure you of the sincere and Affect. regard with which I am, etc.¹⁷

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To REVEREND WILLIAM GORDON

Mount Vernon, April 10, 1787.

Dear Sir: I have received your favor of the 13th. of July and 28th of Sepr.

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I am pleased to hear of your safe arrival in London and of the happy meeting with your friends. I wish you success in the publication of your work and that your future establishment (which you say was not then fixed) may be agreeable to your wishes.

The bill which was sent to Rhode Island had the good fortune to come back protested. Mr. Watson the drawer immediately gave me another (including interest) upon a Gentleman in Salem for £43.3.8 this Currency, which was forwarded to your friend Mr. Mason of Boston and paid.

It is not in my power to give you such accurate information of our Settlements in the Western Country as might answer the purposes of a publication, my own knowledge of it being more general than particular, and information you know is not always to be relied upon. The idea however, of it being made up of the scum and refuse of the Continent, that the people are opposed to Congress, and attached to the

British government is of a piece with other doctrines and consequent publications which have recoiled upon the authors, and which one would think was enough to discourage such unfounded and short sighted reports.

Mrs. Washington having of late been much less troubled with the billious cholick than formerly has made no use of the prescription you were so obliging as to transmit but is not less thankful on that account for your kind attention to her in this instance and joins me, as does the rest of the family in every good wish for yourself and Mrs. Gordon. With great esteem and respect I am, etc.¹⁹

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN LAWSON

Mount Vernon, April 10, 1787.

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Sir: On the 8th. Instant Neptune delivered me your letter of the 2d. Instant. Although he does not profess to be a workman, yet as he has some little knowledge of Bricklaying, seems willing to learn, and is with a man who understands the business, I will keep him, and this shall be my obligation to pay you the sum for which he sold, at the time and agreeably to the terms of Mr. Hunters Sale. I am, etc.

P.S. Since writing the above, and informing Neptune of my determination to buy him he seems a good deal disconcerted on acct. of a wife which he says he has at Mrs. Garrards from whom he is unwilling to be so far removed this also embarrasses me as I am unwilling to hurt the feelings of anyone. I shall therefore if agreeable to you keep him awhile to see if I can reconcile him to the separation (seeing her now and then) in which case I will purchase him, if not I will send him back, and

pay what hire you shall think fit and is reasonable to charge for the time he is here.¹⁸

CERTIFICATE TO CHRISTOPHER LUDOWICK²⁰

Mount Vernon, April 12, 1787.

I have known Mr. Christn. Ludwick from an early period of the War; and have every reason to believe, as well from observation as information that he has been a true and faithful Friend, and Servant to the public. That he has detected and exposed many impositions which were attempted to be practiced by others in the department over which he presided. That he has been the cause of much saving in many respects. And that his department in public life has afforded unquestionable proofs of his integrity and worth.

With respect to the particular losses of which he complains, I have no personal knowledge of them, but have often heard that he has suffered from his zeal in the cause of his Country.²¹

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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20. Formerly Baker General of the Continental Army.

21. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN RAWLINS²²

Mount Vernon, April 13, 1787.

Sir: I have received the freizes for the doors and windows which I think are very pretty, together with your letter sent by Capt. Man, but I did not think proper to comply with the contents of it at this time. Altho' it is not my desire to enter into any dispute respecting the payment of the money, yet before I do it I wish you to view the work, that you may, yourself judge of the execution. My sole motive for employing Mr. Tharp to execute the common plaster work, and giving a higher price than what I could have had it done for by others, was the expectation, that, agreeable to promise, it would have been done in a masterly manner; but this is not the case, and you would think so yourself, was you to see it, the Stucco work in the Parlour is much cracked and Stained, the plain work in the New Room and in every other part of the House, is in fact but little better than the plaster which was pulled down. Mr. Tharp said something should be done to hide the Stains and blemishes, but that it was not proper to do it when he was here, this I expect will be performed. There is likewise

22. Of Baltimore, Md.

wanting to compleat the New Room 6 doz large hollows, 3 doz dble F. O. G.²³ and 6 feet of fluting, some person was to have been sent by you to decorate the pilasters, which has not yet been done. When the work is compleated and your engagement properly fulfil you will find on my part no inclination to withhold the pay. I am, etc.²⁴

To JOHN CANNON

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Mount Vernon, April 13, 1787.

Sir: I have recd. your letter of 22d of Jany. and as I wish to dispose of my Land near you (as well as the tract in Fayette County) I will with pleasure mention my terms to you, that you may make them known and give assurances of the title upon their being complied with. The Land in Washington County I will sell at 30/ Pensylvania Currency pr. Acre (payable in Specie), one fourth

23. Ogees(?).

24. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

down, and the other $\frac{3}{4}$ in Annual payments with interest from the date of the Bonds, perhaps a longer time may be granted for the $\frac{3}{4}$ if the interest is paid punctually. I had much rather sell the whole tract together than to have it divided into Lots, but if a division would facilitate the sale I have no objection, provided the Lots do not interfere with, nor injure the sale of each other and if they sell one with another so as to average the above price for the whole.

As it is my primary object to sell all my lands in that part of the Country, I should not wish to have them leased for any long time, least it should obstruct the sale of them.

I am much obliged to you for your goodness in offering to manage my Land for me in Fayette County; and as Majr. Freeman is about to leave that part of the Country I will accept of your kind offer. My terms for that tract are 40/ Pensa. Currency pr. Acre the payments to be made as above, I have lately had an application for this tract from a Gentleman in Jersey, and am in daily expectation of his final answer to my terms, this however need not prevent the application of others as I am under no obligation to give the preference to anyone, but shall close with the first that comes

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to my terms. I recd. a letter from Mr. Smith in Feby. mentioning that unless I came upon terms with the defendts. it would be best to have the Sheriff execute writs of possession to my Agent before Harvest, that those who had put seed in the Ground might consider it as an obligation confered upon them, to be permitted to take off their Crops, whereas, if writs of possession were not executed, they would take them off of course as their right, but, I suppose, as they have become tenants the immediate necessity of this measure is superceded. I know nothing of any promise which Colo. Crawford made of leaving out any part of the land when he surveyed it, the patent was taken out agreeable to his return and cannot now be altered. However, if the Land is sold I will consider Mr. Hillis as a preferable purchaser of that piece which runs along his line so as to include his improvements, provided it does not affect the sale of the rest. With great esteem etc.

P.S. Inclosed is the form of the writs of Possession as forwarded to me by Mr. Smith, if it should be necessary to execute them.²⁵

25. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES GIBBONS²⁶

Mount Vernon, April 15, 1787.

Sir. I have recd. your letter of the 26th. Ultmo. wherein you request my opinion with respect to your obtaining the benefit of the Commutation. I am sorry that I cannot, with propriety comply with your request; as I have never interfered with, nor had any knowledge of the settlement of those Accts. I can have no grounds whereon to form an opinion. Mr. Pierce,²⁷ to whom you say Congress has referred your Case, is undoubtedly better qualified from the documents which he has, to judge of the propriety or impropriety of it than I can possible be. With respect to extensive furloughs, I can only say that I never considered myself authorized to grant them to officers to go off the Continent, but when application was made for that purpose I referred them to Congress. I am, etc.²⁸

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26. Formerly a lieutenant of the Pennsylvania line, and aide to General Irvine.

27. John Pierce, Paymaster General, United States Army.

28. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM

Mount Vernon, April 20, 1787.

Dear Sir: Not till within these few days have I been honoured with your favours of the 13th. and 25th. of November last I should if they had come to hand sooner been earlier in my acknowledgment of them.

I sincerely wish that this letter may find Miss Newenham in a perfectly recovered State of health, and Lady Newenham and yourself relieved from those anxious cares and sollicitudes which her indisposition must naturally have created. I hope also that neither this, nor anything else, will prevent you from fulfilling your long intended voyage to America. Should this event take place at so early a period as your last letters indicated, any information on the points you have referred to me will hardly arrive in season yet, as there is a possibility of it, the enclosed, which I have obtained from a well informed Gentleman in Alexandria, (more conversant in matters of this kind than I am), will answer your queries with respect to the sorts of linnens which are most saleable in our Markets. The prices of provisions is governed by the Seasons, and quality, generally. Beef and Mutton from the month

of January till June fluctuates from 4d. to 6d., from June till January from 2–1/9d. to 4d. Veal and Lamb are commonly sold by the Quarter the latter from 2/6 to 4/ the other in proportion to the age and quality of the Meat. These prices you will please to observe are in the Currency of *this* State which by the *legal* exchange is 33–1/3 worse then Sterling. Bills however are negotiated at 40 pt. Ct. and have been so for sometime, which will

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enable you to determine whether money, or letters of credit, will answer your purposes best. the former would give least trouble, tho' there is some risk. Bills on London are in more general demand, and consequently command the best prices.

The manner in which you employ your time at Bell Champ (in raising nurseries of fruit, forest trees, and Shrubs) must not only contribute to your health and amusement, but it is certainly among the most rational avocations of life; for what can be more pleasing, than to see the work of ones own hands, fostered by care and attention, rising to maturity in a beautiful display of those advantages and ornaments which by the Combination of Nature and taste of the projector in the disposal of them is always regaling to the eye at the sametime in their seasons they are a grateful [*sic*] to the palate.

I should have much

pleasure in admiring your skill in the propogation and disposal of these things in a visit to Bell Champ. but declining health and an anxious wish to spend the remainder of my days in retirement will fix me to Mount Vernon and a small circle round it whilst I tread on this Theatre.

I will not give you the trouble of receiving a long letter from me at this time because the probability, I think is, that you will have left Ireland before it can get thither. I shall only add therefore that it was with pain I gave the information contained in my last respecting the application for the Consulship at Marsailles: the Inclosures which I transmitted would account for the disappointment and though to be regretted in the present case the principle deserves more to be applauded than condemned for, few things being in the gift of Congress, it was thought that such as could be disposed of ought to be given to those who had suffered in the service of their Country during the late contest and a resolution to that effect having taken place in that body, which for the sake of consistency was obliged to adhere to it.

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I beg to be presented in respectful terms to Lady Newenham, and have the honor to be with great esteem and regard Dr. Sir Yr. etc.²⁹

To GEORGE TURNER

Mount Vernon, April 26, 1787.

Sir: Your letter of the 5th. inst, and the box containing the diplomas for the officers of the State of So. Carolina, came duly to hand. I have signed the diplomas and sent the box to Doctr. Craik in Alexandria to be forwarded by a safe conveyance and have directed it to the care of Colo. Grayson as you requested. The enclosed list I have returned agreeable to your desire. I am, etc.³¹

29. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To HENRY KNOX

Mount Vernon, April 27, 1787.

My dear Sir: After every consideration my judgment was able to give the subject, I had determined to yield to the wishes of many of my friends who seemed anxious for my attending the Convention which is proposed to be holden in Philadelphia the 2d Monday of May, and though so much afflicted with a Rheumatick complaint (of which I have not been entirely free for six months) as to be under the necessity of carrying my arm in a sling for the last ten days, I had fixed on Monday next for my departure, and had made every necessary arrangement for the purpose when (within this hour) I am called by an express, who assures me not a moment is to be lost, to see a mother and *only* sister (who are supposed to be in the agonies of Death) expire;³² and I am hastening to obey this melancholy call after having just buried a Brother³³ who was the intimate companion of

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my youth, and the friend of my ripened age. This journey of mine then, too miles in the disordered frame of my body, will, I am persuaded, unfit me for the intended trip

32. In Washington's "Diary" it is stated that he received the call between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th and set out the next morning about sunrise. He reached Fredericksburg before 2 o'clock the same day, finding both his mother and sister better than had been reported. He returned from Fredericksburg (April 30), reaching Mount Vernon about 6 p.m.

33. John Augustine Washington.

to Philadelphia, and assuredly prevent my offering that tribute of respect to my compatriots in Arms which results from affection and gratitude for their attachment to, and support of me, upon so many trying occasions.

For this purpose it was, as I had (tho' with a good deal of Reluctance) consented, from a conviction that our affairs were verging fast to ruin, to depart from the resolution I had taken of never more stepping out of the walks of private life, that I determined to shew my respect to the General meeting of the Society by coming there the week before. As the latter is prevented, and the other, it is probable, will not take place, I send such papers as have occasionally come to my hands, and may require the inspection, and the consideration of the Cincinnati. An apology for the order in which they are sent is highly necessary, and my present situation is the best I can offer. To morrow I had set apart for the Inspection and arrangement of them, that such only as were fitting, might be laid before the Society; for unless I had time to go over them again with a person who understands the French language, I am not even certain that all of what I send may relate to the affairs of the Cincinati, and certain I am that some are too personal, the sending of which will not, I hope, be

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ascribed to improper motives, when the *only* one I had (as I am in the moment of my departure from home and uncertain of returning to it) is that nothing which has been referred to me, may be withheld.

In the jumbled order you will receive them, I send them by Doctr. Craik in Alexandria to be forwarded by a safe hand in the Stage to Philadelphia.

I make a tender of my affectionate regard to the members who may Constitute the General Meeting of the Society and with sentiments of the highest esteem etc.³⁴

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, April 27, 1787.

My dear Sir: Hurried as I am I cannot (not expecting to see you in Philadelphia) withhold the copy of a Paragraph in a letter which came to my hands yesterday from Mr. Jefferson, and a translation of the Article "Cincinnati" from the Encyclopedie Methodique, forwarded to me by the same Gentleman as they relate to the Society and serve to shew the light in which it is viewed in France. I do not know what the Article from the Encyclopedie Methodique contains as it is in French further than from the purport of Mr. Jeffersons letter, and being received but yesterday it could not be translated previous to my departure but I have desired a Gentleman who lives in my family to do it and have left this letter to be sent with it.

In my present state of mind I can hardly form an opinion whether it will be best to lay the matter before the Society as coming from Mr. Jefferson or as from a person of as good information as any in France I must therefore leave it wholly with you to do as you may think most proper. You know my sentiments from the proceedings of the last General meeting and from my Circular letter. In haste I am etc.

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[MS.H.S.]

To ROBERT MORRIS

Mount Vernon, May 5, 1787.

Dear Sir; When your favor of the 23d. Ult. was sent here from the Post Office, I was at Fredericksburg (to which place I had been called, suddenly, by Express) to bid, as I was prepared to expect, the last adieu to an honoured parent, and an affectionate Sister whose watchful attention to my Mother during her illness had brought to death's door. The latter I hope is now out of danger, but the former cannot long Survive the disorder which has reduced her to a Skeleton, tho' she is somewhat amended.

I do not know how, sufficiently, to express my thankfulness to Mrs. Morris and you for your kind invitation to lodge at your house, and though I could not be more happy anywhere, yet as there is great reason to apprehend that the business of the Convention (from the tardiness of some States, and the discordant opinions of others) will not be brought to a speedy conclusion, I cannot prevail on myself to give so much trouble to a private family as such a length of time must do. I hope therefore that Mrs. Morris and you will not take it a miss that

I decline the polite and obliging offer you have made me.³⁵

Mrs. Washington is become too domestick, and too attentive to two little Grand Children to leave home, and I can assure you, Sir, that it was not until after a long struggle I could obtain my own consent to appear again in a public theatre. My first remaining wish being, to glide gently down the stream of life in tranquil retirement till I shall arrive at the world of Spirits.

Mrs. Morris, yourself and family, have every good wish that Mrs. Washington and I can offer, and with the sincerest esteem and regard, I am, etc.³⁶

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35. After reaching Philadelphia, Washington consented to lodge with Robert Morris.

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To LUND WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, May 7, 1787.

Dear Lund: Company, and several other matters which pressed upon me yesterday, and which has obliged me to postpone my journey a day longer is the reason why I did not acknowledge the receipt of your letter by Ned.³⁸

I need not tell you, because a moment's recurrence to your own accounts will evince the fact, that there is no source from which I derive more than a sufficiency for the daily calls of my family, except what flows from the collection of old debts, and scanty and precarious enough, God knows this is. My estate for the last 11 years has not been able to make both ends meet. I am encumbered now with the deficiency. I mention this for no other purpose than to shew that however willing, I am not able to pay debts unless I could sell land, which I have publicly advertised without finding bidders.

The enclosed Bond I have had the most pointed assurances would be paid by the first of June. and for that reason if it will answer your purpose you may collect and apply the money to the use for which you want it. If this will not do, there is some flour and wheat (if there be water to grind it)

38. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

in the Mill which you may dispose of for the same end. because I would not wish you to be disappointed. I am etc.³⁹

***To THOMAS JEFFERSON**

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Philadelphia, May 30, 1787.

Dear Sir: It has so happened, that the letter which you did me the honor of writing to me the 14th. of November last, did not come to my hands till the first of the present month; and at a time when I was about to set off for the Convention of the States, appointed to be holden in this City the 14th. Instt. Consequently, it has not been in my power at an earlier period, to reply to the important matters wch. are the subjects thereof. This, possibly, may be to be regretted if the house of de Coulteaux should, in the meantime, have directed its enquiries to Philadelphia, Baltimore or New York without having had the advantages which are to be derived from the extension of the inland Navigations of the Rivers Potomack and James, deliniated to them. Silence on this head

39. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

may be construed into inferiority, when the fact (in my judgment) is, that Alexandria or Richmond, provided the communication with the latter can be conducted by the Green brier and Great Kanhawa (as some aver and others doubt) has infinite advantages over either of the Towns just mentioned. With respect to James River, I am not able to speak with so much precision as of the former, with which (having had opportunities to be so) I am much better acquainted. To this therefore I shall chiefly confine my observations.

In investigating the advantages of Alexandria as the most proper place for a principal deposit in the Fur Trade, I have thought it necessary to leave as little room for partiality and prejudice to operate as possible, by concealing, as far as may be, the object of the investigation. Tho' the result has been favourable to Alexandria, I trust it will be found to have arisen from such weighty considerations, as must be felt by every mind; particularly that of the Merchant whose interests on this subject must alone determine the scale. With A very superficial knowledge of the relative Geography of the places (Alexanda. Baltimore, Philada. New York) in

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contemplation by Monsr. Coulteaux to establish a concern in the Fur Trade to the Country yielding this Article, a meet glance at the Map must decide Alexandria in point of distance to be the most convenient spot. Hence, a considerable saving would accrue in the articles of Land carriage; an object of so much importance in the communication between places seperated by immense wildernesses, and rugged roads, as to render any comment on it to a Merchant, superfluous. But the difficulty arising from this sourse (tho' already less) will soon, in a great measure, be obviated with respect to Alexandria, by the extension of the Navigation of Potomack. The progress already made in this great National work, Not only justifies this opinion, but the most sanguine expectations wch. have been formed of its success. Granting therefore that the advantage of a greater proximity to the Fur Country, was not on the side of Alexandria, still the immense superiority which a communication almost by water, would give it, must be obvious to all who consider the case, with which the distant produce of the different, and opposite parts of the earth are mutually exchanged, by means of this element. As neither of the other places can ever enjoy this singular benefit to so great a degree, Alexandria must, of course, be the place to which the Inhabitants of the Western Country must resort with all their Commodities (unless by the other channel mentioned,

Richmond should be found equal to it); and from whence they will take back their returns in foreign products with the least expence. The Act for opening a road from the highest point to which the Navigation of Potomack can be extended, to the Cheat river, must also be considered as an important circumstance in favour of Alexandria; and in the same light the Act of the last Session for opening a road to the Mouth of the little Kanhawa, from the road last mentioned, must be considered. Besides these, leave has been obtained from Pensylvania by the States of Virginia and Maryld., to open another road from Wills' Creek to the Yohiogani, by the nearest and best rout. By these Acts, great part of the Trade which has been accustomed to flow through Pittsburgh to Philadelphia must be derived in rich streams to the Potomack: for I believe it to be as true in commerce as in every thing else, that nature, however she may be opposed for a while, will soon return her regular

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course, neither therefore the attractive power of wealth, nor the exertions of industry, will long, it is presumed, withhold from Alexandria the advantages which nature has bestowed on her.

If the great extent of territory adjacent to the Fur Country, which Virginia

possesses, in comparison with the States to which the other Towns belong, be viewed; Alexandria must still be considered [*sic*] as the most proper place. The Country about the Illinois and Wabash (Rivers which nearly reach the Lakes in their Course) has been long considered as the most abundant in Furs; and the completion of the Navigation of James River must, without doubt, render Richmond the most convenient for *these* of any other; if, as I have once or twice before observed, the Navigation of the Kanhawa can be improved to any good account. By those however who are not acquainted with the nature of the western waters, and the short portages between them, it may be objected that the Rivers above mentioned are too far South to meet with good Furs; but it may not be amiss to observe here, that the Rivers of Lake Erie &ca. communicate to nearly, and with such ease, with those of the Ohio, as to afford the shortest and best transportation from Detroit; by which all the Furs of the upper lakes must pass; whether they go to Canada, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Alexandria or Richmond; and that the routes, from thence to the two latter are thro' the territory of the United States; whereas the one to New York passes along the line, and is besides, Subject to interruptions by Ice when these are entirely free from it. These objections, particularly the latter, apply in a degree both to Philadelphia and Baltimore; because if either can

avail itself of water transportation, it must be by the more Northern streams of the Ohio, with the Waters of the Susquehanna, considerably above the Monongahela, and still more so above the Great Kanhawa, the first of which communicates with the River Potomack, and the latter with that of James.

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The last advantage which occurs to me in favor of Alexandria, is, that the business would be carried on there without any competition: No one having yet engaged so deeply in it, as to hold out any encouragement. I have even been informed that Waggon's loaded with Furs, have sometimes passed through Alexandria to Baltimore in search of a Market; and from Winchester it is their common practice to go there with this Commodity; tho' Alexandria is much more convenient to them. On the side of New York, the most eligible Posts for this trade are in the possession of the British; and whenever they are ceded it will, I expect, be found, that the Merchants of that Nation, from their Wealth, long establishment, and consequent knowledge of the Country, will be such formidable competitors, as to draw the greater part of the Furs into Canada.

I shall now proceed to mention a person in whose skill and integrity

Monsr. Coulteaux may, I think, have the fullest confidence; and tho' I am precluded in some measure from so doing by being told that it is required that he should be an American born; I shall still venture to name a Gentleman who is a native of Ireland, Colo. John Fitzgerald. The active Services of this Gentleman during the War, his long residence in the Country, and intermarriage in it (with one of the most respectable families, Digges of Maryland) all entitle him to be considered as an American. The laws of this Country know no difference between him and a Native of America. He has besides been bred to trade, is esteemed a Man of property and is at present engaged in the former in Alexandria. Lest however this should be considered as an insuperable obstacle, I shall name a second, Robert Townshend Hooe Esqr., who has every desired requisite. I shall just observe, that if the business is carried on extensively, it would probably require the various acquaintance and combined activity of each of those Gentlemen.

I come now to the other part of your letter, which concerns the Cincinnati, and here indeed I scarcely know what to say. It is a delicate, it is a perplexing subject. Not having the extract from the Encyclopedia before me, I cannot now undertake to enter into the merits

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of the publication. It may therefore perhaps be as much as will be expected from me, to observe that the Author appears in general to have detailed very

candidly and ingenuously the motives, and inducements wch. gave birth to the Society. Some of the subsequent facts, which I cannot, however, from memory pretend to discuss with precision are thought by Gentlemen who have seen the publication to be misstated; in so much that it is commonly said, truth and falsehood are so intimately blended, that it will be difficult to sever them.

For myself, I only recollect two or three circumstances, in the narration, of which palpable mistakes seem to have insinuated themselves. Majr. L'Enfant did not arrive and bring the Eagles during the Session of the General meeting, but sometime before that Convention. The Legislature of Rhode Island never passed any Act whatever on the subject (that ever carne to my knowledge) notwithstanding what Mirabeau and others had previously advanced. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the supposition of the author that the Society was instituted partly because the Country could not then pay the Army, except the assertion that the United States have now made full and compleat provision for paying not only the arrearages due to the Officers, but the half pay or commutation, at their option. From whence the Author deduces an argument for its dissolution. Though I conceive, this never had any

thing to do with the Institution; yet, the Officers, in most of the States, who never have, nor I believe expect to receive one farthing of the principal or interest on their final settlement securities, would doubtless be much obliged to the Author to convince them how, and when they received a compensation for their Services. No foreigner, nor American who has been absent sometime, will easily comprehend how tender those concerned are on this point. I am sorry to say, a great many of the Officers consider me as having in a degree committed myself by inducing them to trust too much in the justice of their Country. They heartily wish no settlement had been made, because it has rendered them obnoxious to their fellow Citizens, without affording the least emolument.

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For the reason I have mentioned, I cannot think it expedient for me to go into an investigation of the Writers deductions. I shall accordingly content myself with giving you some idea of the part I have acted, posterior to the first formation of the Association.

When I found that you, and many of the most respectable characters in the Country would entirely acquiesce with the Institution as altered and amended in the first General Meeting of 1784, and that the objections against the obnoxious parts were wholly done away, I was prevailed upon to accept the Presidency. Happy in finding (so

far as I could learn by assiduous enquiries) that all the clamours and jealousies, which had been excited against the original association, had ceased; I judged it a proper time in the last Autumn, to withdraw myself from any farther Agency in the business, and to make my retirement compleate agreeably to my original plan. I wrote circular letters to all the State Societies, announcing my wishes, informing that I did not propose to be at the triennial meeting, and requested not to be re-elected President. This was the last step of a public nature I expected ever to have taken. But having since been appointed by my Native State to attend the National Convention, and having been pressed to a compliance in a manner which it hardly becomes me to describe; I have, in a measure, been obliged to sacrifice my own Sentiments, and to be present in Philadelphia at the very time of the General Meeting of the Cincinnati; after which I was not at liberty to decline the Presidency without placing myself in an extremely disagreeable situation with relation to that brave and faithful class of men, whose persevering friendship I had experienced on so many trying occasions.

The business of this Convention is as yet too much in embryo to form

any opinion of the result. Much is expected from it by some; but little by others; and nothing by a few. That something is necessary, all will agree; for the situation of the General Governmt. (if it can be called a governmt.) is shaken to its foundation, and liable to be overset by every blast. In a word, it is at an end, and unless a remedy is soon applied, anarchy and confusion will inevitably ensue. But having greatly exceeded

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the bounds of a letter already I will only add assurances of that esteem, regard, and respect.⁴⁶

46. From the *Jefferson Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To MARQUIS DE BOUILLÉ⁴⁸**

Philadelphia, June 1, 1787.

Sir: Under this cover you will do me the honor to receive a letter directed to the President, or Senior Officer of the Society of the Cincinnati in France;⁴⁹ enclosing a resolve of the General Meeting of that Society in these United States, holden in this City, last Month.

If any thing, Sir, could add to the pleasure I feel in obeying the Orders of this Society, it is the favourable opportunity that is afforded me of expressing to you the Sentiments of admiration and respect with which your character has inspired me; and to assure you of the esteem and consideration with which I have the honor etc.⁵⁰

48. François Claude Amour, Marquis de Bouillé.

49. This letter was also dated June 1 and is in facsimile in Contenson's *La Société des Cincinnati de France*. It states: "Persuaded I am that, Your Excellency will derive as much pleasure from offering to, and Investing the Marquis de Bouillé with the Order of the Cincinnati. as it gives me to communicate for these purposes the Sentiments of the Society."

50. From a facsimile in Contenson's *La Société des Cincinnati de France*.

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Philadelphia, June 6, 1787.

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My dear Marqs. Not till within this hour was I informed of the intention of Mr. Rutledge⁵² (son to the Governor Rutledge of South Carolina whom I believe you know) to embark in the Packet for France, or that he was to set out in the morning for New York, to take shipping the day after. Tho' totally, unprepared (immersed as I am in the business of the Convention) I cannot let this Gentleman depart without a remembrance of my friendship for you. It was, when I came here, and still is, my intention, to write you a long letter from this place before I leave it, but the hour is not yet come when I can do it to my own Satisfaction or for your information. I therefore shall wait till the result of the present meeting is more matured, and till the members who constitute it are at liberty to communicate the proceedings more freely before I attempt it.

You will I dare say, be surprized my dear Marquis to receive a letter from me at this place, you will probably, be more so, when you hear that I am again brought, contrary to my public declaration, and intention, on a public theatre, such is the viscissitude of human affairs, and such the frailty

52. John Rutledge, jr.

of human nature that no man I conceive can well answer for the resolutions he enters into.

The pressure of the public voice was so loud, I could not resist the call to a convention of the States which is to determine whether we are to have a Government of respectability under which life, liberty, and property will be secured to us, or are to submit to one which may be the result of chance or the moment, springing perhaps from anarchy and Confusion, and dictated perhaps by some aspiring demagogue who will not consult the interest of his Country so much as his own ambitious views. What may be the result of the present deliberation is more than I am able, at present, if I was at liberty, to inform you, and therefore I will make this letter short, with the assurance of being more particular when I can be more satisfactory, to this period also I refer more than to acknowledge the receipt of your obliging favours of the 7th. of February last.

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Every good wish that can flow from a warm and sincere heart, much attached to you, and every one connected with you, is presented to Madam de la Fayette and your little flock; and with sentiments of encreasing friendship and love. I am, etc.⁵³

53. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On June 6 Washington wrote also brief notes to Comte de Rochambeau, Comte D'Estaing, and Marquis de Chastellux, introducing John Rutledge, jr. Copies of these notes are in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

***To GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON**

Philadelphia, June 9, 1787.

My dear Sir: At length, I have obtained the means for discharging the balle. I am owing you. Mr. Morris will direct his corrispondent in New York to pay you the sum of Eight hundred and forty dollars, which will be about the amount of £325.6.0 (the balle. of your Acct. as rendered to Jany. last) with inst. thereon of Seven pr Ct.

till the middle of this month.

As this is intended as a letter of advice only, I shall add nothing more at present, than my best and respectful Complimts. to Mrs. Clinton and the rest of your family, and that I am with sentiments of very great esteem and regard My dear Sir Yr. etc.⁵⁴

54. From a photostat of the original in the *Washington Papers*.

To ANNIS BOUDINOT STOCKTON

Philadelphia, June 30, 1787.

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Madam: At the sametime that I pray you to accept my sincere thanks for the obliging letter with which you honored me on the 26th. Ulto (accompanied by a poetical performance for which I am more indebted to your partiality than to any merits I possess, by which your Muse could have been inspired. I have to entreat that you will ascribe my silence to any cause rather than to a want of respect or friendship for you; the truth really is that what with my attendance in Convention, morning business, receiving, and returning visits, and Dining late with the numberless⁵⁹ &ca., which are not to be avoided in so large a City as Philadelphia, I have Scarcely a moment in which I can enjoy the pleasures which result from the recognition on the many instances of your attention to me or to express a due sense of them. I feel more however than I can easily communicate for the last testimony of your flattering recollection of me. The friendship you are

59. Omission of the "Letter Book" copyist. The word may have been "personages."

so good as to assure me you feel for me, claims all my gratitude and sensibility, and meets the most cordial return. with compliments to your good family I have the honor, etc.⁶⁰

60. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*, which is addressed to Mrs. Richard Stockton.

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Philadelphia, June 30, 1787.

My dear Marqs. The Gentleman who will do the honor of presenting this letter to you is Mr. Shippen, Son of your old acquaintance Doctr. Shippen⁶¹ of this City who having been at the Temple proposes to visit Paris, and of course to offer homage to you.

61. He died in 1798.

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He is a very sensible young man and as far as opportunities are afforded me to Judge, possess a well cultivated mind which induces me without hesitation or apology to introduce him to your countenance and Civilities. To repeat to you the assurances of that Friendship with which I am warmed would not add ought to your conviction of it because you are already persuaded of the sincere regard and affection etc.⁶²

To DAVID STUART

Philadelphia, July 1, 1787.

Dear Sir: I have been favored with your letter of the 17th ultimo.

In May, Mr. Alexr. Donald made me a remittance in Bills on Robert Morris Esqr. of this City to the amount of 1094 35/90 Dollrs., and a few days since I received another draught on the same Gentleman for 306 65/90 Dollars making together 1401 60/90 Dollrs. or Four hundred and twenty pounds ten Shillings Virginia Currency, which I have placed to the Credit of Mr. Custis's Estate.

Rhode Island, from our last

62. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On June 30 Washington wrote to Comte de Rochambeau, introducing Young Shippen. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the Washington Papers. Entered in the "Letter Book" under September 26 is a brief note to Thomas Jefferson, also introducing Mr. Shippen.

On this same day (June 30) Washington wrote also to the president of the Agricultural Society of Philadelphia, forwarding Arthur Young's *Annals of Agriculture* which Young had sent to Washington to be presented to the Philadelphia society. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

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accts. still preseveres in that impolitic, unjust, and one might add without much impropriety scandalous conduct, which seems to have marked all her public Councils of late.

Consequently, no Representation is yet here from thence. New Hampshire, tho' Delegates have been appointed, is also unrepresented. Various causes have been assigned, whether well, or ill-founded I shall not take upon me to decide. The fact, however, is that they are not here. Political contests, and want of money, are amidst the reasons assigned for the non-attendance of the members.

As the rules of the convention prevent me from relating any of the proceedings of it, and the gazettes contain, more fully than I could detail, other occurrences of a public nature, I have little to communicate to you on the article of news. Happy indeed would it be, if the convention shall be able to recommend such a firm and permanent government for this Union, that all who live under it may be secure in their lives, liberty, and property; and thrice happy would it be, if such a recommendation should obtain. Every body wishes, every body expects something from the convention; but what will be the final result of its deliberation, the book of fate must disclose. Persuaded I am, that the primary cause of all our disorders lies in the different State governments, and in the tenacity of that power, which pervades the whole of their systems. Whilst independent sovereignty is so ardently contended for, whilst the

local views of each State, and separate interests, by which they are too much governed, will not yield to a more enlarged scale of politics, incompatibility in the laws of different States, and disrespect to those of the general government, must render the situation of this great country weak, inefficient, and disgraceful. It has already done so, almost to the final dissolution of it. Weak at home and disregarded abroad is our present condition, and contemptible enough it is.

Entirely unnecessary was it to offer any apology for the sentiments you were so obliging as to offer me. I have had no wish more ardent, through the whole progress of this business, than that of knowing what kind of government is best calculated for us to live under. No

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doubt there will be a diversity of sentiments on this important subject; and to inform the judgment, it is necessary to hear all arguments that can be advanced. To please all is impossible, and to attempt it would be vain. The only way, therefore, is, under all the views in which it can be placed, and with a due consideration to circumstances, habits, &c., &c., to form such a government as will bear the scrutinizing eye of criticism, and trust it to the good sense and patriotism of the people to carry it into effect. Demagogues, men who are unwilling to lose any of their State consequence, and interested characters in each, will oppose any general government. But let

these be regarded rightly, and justice, it is to be hoped, will at length prevail. My best wishes attend Mrs. Stuart, yourself, and the girls. If I can render [you] any service whilst I remain here, I shall be happy in doing it. I am, &c.63

63. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To HECTOR ST. JOHN DE CREVECŒUR

Philadelphia, July 9, 1787.

Sir: The letter you did me the honor of writing to me by Commodore Paul Jones came safe; as did the volumes of the *Farmer's Letters*.⁶⁷ For both, particularly for the compliment of the letter, I pray you to accept my best thanks. Let me express my gratitude to you, at the same time, Sir, for the obliging offer of transmitting any communications I may have occasion to make, to my good and much esteemed friend the Marquis de Lafayette, whose zeal and services in the cause of this country merit as much applause from his fellow citizens, as they meet admiration from the rest of mankind. I congratulate you on your safe arrival in this country, and with sentiments of great esteem &c.⁶⁸

67. Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), which were, later (1784–87), republished in France in the French language.

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68. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To ALEXANDER HAMILTON**

Philadelphia, July 10, 1787.

Dear Sir: I thank you for your Communication of the 3d. When I refer you to the state of the Councils which prevailed at the period you left this City, and add, that they are now, if possible, in a worse train than ever; you will find but little ground on which the hope of a good establishment can be formed. In a word, I *almost* despair of seeing a favourable issue to the proceedings of our Convention, and do therefore repent having had any agency in the business.

The Men who oppose a strong and energetic government are, in my opinion, narrow minded politicians, or are under the influence of local views. The apprehension expressed by them that the *people* will not accede to the form proposed is the *ostensible*, not the *real* cause of the opposition; but admitting that the *present* sentiment is as they prognosticate, the question ought nevertheless to be, is it, or is it not, the best form?⁶⁹ If the former, recommended it, and it will assuredly obtain mauger opposition. I am sorry you went away. I wish you were back.⁷⁰ The crisis is equally important and alarming, and no opposition under such circumstances should discourage exertions till the signature is fixed. I will not, at this time trouble you with more than my best wishes and

69. The "Letter Book" has, at this point, "that such a Country as this can adopt?"

70. Hamilton was present in the convention June 29, but left Philadelphia on that day. He apparently was not in the convention again until August 13.

sincere regards. I am &c.⁷¹

To GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON

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Philadelphia, July 11, 1787.

Dear Sir: The bearer Mr. Timothy Tuttle has been with me to obtain on some terms (I did not enquire what) part of the Land we have a Joint interest in, up the Mohawk River. The answer I have given him is, that whatever you shall do concerning them I will abide by. With great esteem and Regd. I am, etc.⁷²

71. From the *Hamilton Papers*. The text varies slightly from that found in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

72. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To RICHARD HENRY LEE

Philadelphia, July 19, 1787.

Dear Sir: I have had the honor to receive your favor of the 15th instant, and thank you for the ordinance which was enclosed in it. My sentiments, with respect to the navigation of the Mississippi, have been long fixed, and are not dissimilar to those which are expressed in your letter. I have ever been of opinion that the true policy of the Atlantic States would be instead of contending prematurely for the free navigation of that river (which eventually, and perhaps as soon as it shall be our true interest to obtain it) must happen, to open and improve the natural communications with the western country, through which the produce of it might be transported with convenience and ease to our markets. Till you get low down the Ohio, I conceive, that it would, (considering the length of the voyage to New Orleans, the difficulty of the current, and the time necessary to perform it in) be the interest of the inhabitants to bring their produce to our ports; and sure I am, there is no other tie by which they will long form a link in the chain of federal union. I believe, however, from the temper in which those people appear to be, and from the ambitious and turbulent spirit

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of some of their demagogues, that it has become a moot point to determine (when every circumstance which

attends this business is brought into view) what is best to be done. The State of Virginia having taken the matter up with so high a hand, is not among the least embarrassing or disagreeable parts of the difficulty.

Will you permit me to put the enclosed under cover to you; from the Gentleman to whom it is addressed, I have lately received a letter to which this is an acknowledgment. with very great esteem and regard. I have the honor etc.⁷⁴

74. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PHILIP MARSTELLER

Philadelphia, July 25, 1787.

Sir: You would oblige me by letting me know whether there is a prospect of your purchasing, on the terms specified in my letter of Instructions, any of the Articles mentioned in the list handed to you therewith particularly Blankets as the Season in which these will be wanted is now fast approaching and against which they must be provided for the accomodation of my Negros. If there is a moral certainty of obtaining them through your means, I will depend thereon, if not, I must look out in time, and therefore give you the trouble of this Enquiry. I am, etc.⁷⁹

79. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To CHEVALIER JOHN PAUL JONES**

Philadelphia, July 22, 1787.

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Sir: I avail myself of the liberty you have been so obliging as to give me, to trouble you with the care of the enclosed packet. It was my intention to have added to this trouble by increasing the number of my letters, but business has prevented; let me pray therefore that you will do me the honor to present me, in affectionate terms to the Marqs. de la Fayette, and assure him, that though hurried, I should not have slipped so favourable an opportunity of writing to him, if the business of the Convention (for I have nothing else new, to offer him) could have been communicated in the present unfinished state of it. To the Count de Rochambeau, Marqs. de Chartellux and others,

with whom I have the honor of a particular acquaintance, I tender my best regards. I wish you a pleast. Voyage; and the attainment of the objects of it. and have the honor etc.⁷⁷

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Philadelphia, August 15, 1787.

My dear Marqs: Altho' the business of the Fœderal Convention is not yet clos'd, nor I, thereby, enabled to give you an account of its proceedings; yet the opportunity afforded by Commodore Paul Jones' Return to France is too favourable for me to omit informing you, that the present expectation of the members is, that it will end about the first of next month; when, or as soon after as it shall be in my power, I will communicate the result of our long deliberation to you.

News paper accts. inform us that the Session of the Assembly of Notables is ended. and you have had the goodness (in your letter of the 5th. of May) to communicate some of the proceedings to me. among which is that of the interesting motion made by yourself respecting the expenditure of public money by Monsr. de Callonne, and the consequence thereof.

77. From a facsimile of the original in a sales catalogue, 1931.

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The patriotism, by which this motion was dictated throws a lustre on the action, which cannot fail to dignify the Author, and I sincerely hope with you, that much good will result from the deliberations of so respectable a Council, I am not less ardent in my wish that you may succeed in your plan of toleration in religious matters. Being no bigot myself to any mode of worship, I am disposed to indulge the professors of Christianity in the church, that road to Heaven, which to them shall seem the most direct plainest easiest and least liable to exception. Had not the account of your recovery accompanied that of your indisposition I should have felt many anxious and painful moments from the recital of the former. but let the first admonish you, my dear Marquis, against application too intense. This may disqualify you for the laudable pursuits to which zeal for the good of your Country and the honor of human nature may prompt you, and which may prove injurious both to yourself and it.

The politicians of this Country hardly know what to make of the present situation of European affairs. If serious consequences do not follow the blood which has been shed in the United Netherlands these people will certainly have acted differently from the rest of Mankind; and in another quarter one would think there could hardly be so much

Smoke without some fire between the Russian and Turk. Should these disputes kindle the flame of war it is not easy to prescribe bounds to its extension or effect. The disturbances in Massachusetts have subsided; but there are seeds of discontent in every part of this Union; ready to produce other disorders if the wisdom of the present Convention should not be able to devise, and the good sense of the people be found ready to adopt a more vigorous and energetic government, than the one under which we now live; for the present, from experience, has been found too feeble and inadequate to give that security, which our liberties and property render absolutely essential, and which the fulfilment of public faith loudly requires.

Vain is it to look for respect from abroad, or tranquillity at home; vain is it to murmur at the detention of our Western Posts, or complain of the restriction of our commerce; vain are

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all the attempts to remedy the evils complained of by Mr Dumas to discharge the interest due on foreign loans, or satisfy the claims of foreign Officers, the neglect of doing which is a high impeachment of our National character, and is hurtful to the feelings of every well wisher to this Country in and out of it; vain is it to talk of chastising the Algerines, or doing ourselves Justice in any other respect, till the wisdom and force of the Union can be more concentrated and better applied. In what accountable terms, My dear Marquis, shall I express or convey to you, my thanks for the Maltese Asses. Believe me, however, when I assure you, that your friendship in this

respect has embarrassed me not a little for with much truth I can declare that nothing was further from my thoughts than to make you more than the medium of application or to saddle you with more than the first advance in obtaining them thro' you alone, I was enabled to accomplish this matter, and the desire of introducing animals of so much use into this Country prompted me to accept of your influence with Admiral de Suffran, to whom, if I am under obligation, you would do me a singular favour to make my acknowledgments acceptable. With sentiments of the highest respect, and most perfect regard for Madam de la Fayette and the rest of your family and with the most Affecte. attachment to you, I am ever yours, &c.83

***To HENRY KNOX**

Philadelphia, August 19, 1787.

My dear Sir: By slow, I wish I could add and sure, movements, the business of the Convention progresses; but to say when it will end, or what will be the result, is more than I can venture to do; and therefore I shall hazard no opinion thereon.

83. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

If however, *some* good does not proceed from the Session, the defects cannot, with propriety, be charged to the hurry with which the business has been conducted: Yet, many

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things may be forgot, some of them not well digested, and others become a mere nullity. Notwithstanding which I wish a disposition may be found in Congress, the several States Legislatures, and the community at large to adopt the Government which may be agreed on in Convention; because I am fully persuaded it is the best that can be obtained at the present moment, under such diversity of ideas as prevail.

I should have had great pleasure in a visit to New York during the adjournment of the Convention; but not foreseeing the precise period at which it would take place, or the length of it; I had, previously thereto, put my carriage into the hands of a workman to repair, and had not the means of going. I condole very sincerely with Mrs. Knox and yourself on your late misfortune; but am sure, however severe the trial, each of you have fortitude enough to meet it. Nature, no doubt, must feel severely before *calm* resignation will over come it.

I offer my best respects to Mrs. Knox, and every good wish for the family, with great regard and unfeigned Affectn. I am etc.

[MS.H.S.]

To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD

Philadelphia, August 26, 1787.

Dear Sir: Having heard nothing from you, in reply to a letter I wrote you in answer to yours of the 25th. of June, respecting your wishes to enter your Son on [*sic*] board the French Navy, I am led to apprehend a miscarriage, or that the letter to or from you may be lying in some of the Post Offices (a thing not very unusual) I therefore address you again on the subject.

The purport of my former letter was to ask, whether you had been encouraged to hope, or to expect much (from any Gentleman competent to advise you) from such a project, if

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not, whether it would not be better to delay your decisions on this point till enquiry could be first made, and that, under the impression of the propriety of it, I would detain your letter for France till I could hear further from you on this subject among others for the Following reasons.

1. Because I think your Sons going into the French Navy would be attended with greater expence than you apprehend.
2. That the highest rank he could expect to meet at entrance would be that of Midshipman.
3. That for want of an interest always

at hand his prospect of rising would be very unpromising

4. That from a difference of Country, language, religion and manners, the Service would soon become irksome and disagreeable to him and in the last place. Because I do not think that they are such good Seamen as the British or Americans.

Friendship and regard for you and your Son, induced me to make these observations before I parted with your letters (supposing a small delay could make no great difference in your plan) but if you have been well advised in the matter and will write me again I will immediately forward your letters with one of my own to the Marqs. de la Fayette, as the delay of your answer has far exceeded anything that could have been expected, I shall be concerned if any inconvenience should have resulted from it having every disposition to comply with your wishes in this, or any other respect wherein I can do it consistently. My love to Mrs. Spotswood. I am, etc.⁸⁴

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM HARTSHORNE

Philadelphia, August 30, 1787.

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Sir: The Gentleman who will present this letter to you is Major Baylies⁸⁶ of Massachusetts, Son in law to Genl. Lincoln. He is on business to Virginia, and at his request, I give you the trouble of receiving it as introductory of him, believing him to be a man of character and worth.

I understand, that the subscribers to the Potomack Navigation has been called upon for another advance, my proportion of which shall be paid so soon as I return, which cannot, now, be at a distant period. With great esteem, I am, etc.⁸⁷

***To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Philadelphia, September 2, 1787.

Dear Sir: I avail myself of the polite assurance of your last, to trouble you with the enclosed. If the Commodore should have left New York, you would oblige me by forwarding it. I regretted exceedingly, not having had it

86. Hodijah(?) Baylies.

87. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

in my power to visit New York during the adjournment of the Convention, last Month. Not foreseeing with any precision the period at which it was likely to take place, nor the length of it, I had put my Carriage in the hands of a Workman to be repaired, and had not the means of moving during the recess but with, or on the curtesy of, others.

I thank you for the hints contained in your letter, and with best wishes for Mrs. Jay, and great Affection for yourself I am, etc.⁹⁴

To CHEVALIER JOHN PAUL JONES

Philadelphia, September 2, 1787.

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Sir: Should this letter reach you in time, the purport of it is, to beg your care of the enclosed to the Marqs. de la Fayette; and to inform you that all the letters, Memorials, and Papers of every kind which had been transmitted to me as President General of the Society of the Cincinnati, were forwarded (not expecting to attend it myself) to the last General meeting holden in this City but how they were acted upon is not in my power to inform you, not being at it.

I have received, and have

94. From a facsimile in a sales catalogue, 1925.

forwarded to my house the Bust⁹⁵ you did me the honor to present me with, and shall place it with my own. Wishing you every possible felicity I have the honor, ect.⁹⁶

To CHARLES PETTIT

Philadelphia, September 7, 1787.

Sir: Having received the dimensions of three more of my Chimneys for which I want castings, I have to request them as follows.

First

3. 6½ high in front

1 6½ deep

3. 3. Wide at the back

Second

3. 2½ high in front

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1. 6½ Deep

3. 5. Wide at the back

Third

3. 1. high in front

1. 10 Deep

3. 5. Wide at the back

The above being the exact size of the Chimneys (already built and in use) it is not to be forgotten that the thickness of the *back* plate is to be deducted from the width of those on the sides or vica versa as shall be adjudged best.

The mould already made,

95. The bust of Jones was a replica of the original by Houdon and is listed in the "Inventory of the Contents of Mount Vernon" as "1 Bust in Plaster of Paul Jones" and appraised at \$20.

96. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

may subserve for the above Casting reducing it first to the largest of the above Chimneys, then to the second size, and lastly to the smallest. the crest and Cypher to each.

I should be glad to receive them as soon as possible and the money shall be immediately paid for them. I am, etc.97

97. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS SMITH

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Philadelphia, September 16, 1787.

Sir: You will be puzzled to acct. for my long silence, the truth is, before I came to this City I resolved to postpone writing till I should have arrived at and should have met a direct conveyance from it, and afterwards. The variety of matters which have occurred and pressed upon me, have, in some measure, put it out of my power to do it at an earlier period than now.

I wish, sincerely, that you had been so obliging as to have designated the sum with which you would have been satisfied for conducting my Ejectments, I still wish that you would do this, and receive it out of the money which (by Major Free-mans report to me) you must be on the point of recovering, and permit me to add moreover that I wish, yet more ardently I had it in my power to pay you in a more agreeable manner, but the fact is my expences in this City have been so much greater than I expected that it has deprived me of the means. Freemans letter to me, contains this Paragraph.

At March term I delivered Mr. Smith sundry obligations and took his rect. for them, which with the one in his hands befor, amounted to £533.19.0. I make no doubt he will soon recover the money and transmit it to you.

He adds, I have lodged with Mr. Richard Noble near Redstone old Fort £38.1.3. this sum I have requested Mr. Noble to pay you, if it has not been forwarded to me, thro' some other channel, and I hope measures has been, or will be taken to obtain from my opponants the legal fees and other costs which they burthened me with, by means of the ejectments. Mr. Smiley handed me a letter some time after my arrival at this City, accompanied by £12.10. recovered from one Cunningham.

For the anxiety you express to have undergone during the prosecution of this Suit, I feel myself exceedingly obliged and pray you to accept my thanks for this proof of your attachment as well as for the care with which the business was conducted. I am, etc.99

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99. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN CANNON

Philadelphia, September 16, 1787.

Sir: I was surprized to find by your letter of the 8th. of May, dated in this City (received after I came to it) that you had not got the letter I wrote to you sometime before under cover to Colo Bayard of Pittsburg especially as the Colonel has acknowledge the receipt of it, and promised that it should be carefully forwarded to your house.

In that letter, to the best of my recollection, I requested that you would take charge of all my concerns, as well as those in Fayette, as Washington Counties and act for me as you would do for yourself. To this, if my memory serves me, your powers already extend, if not, I now give them to you by this letter.

I cannot consent to take two dollars a acre for the Land in Washington County. If the Government of this Country

gets well toned, and property perfectly secured, I have no doubt of obtaining the price I have fixed on the land, and that in a short time, in the meanwhile, I had rather rent it from year to year than give leases for a term of years as the latter will certainly impede the Sale.

For the Land in Fayette County, I have been offered the price I had fixed on it, viz Forty Shillings pr. Acre, by a number of New Jersey people but we have differed with respect to the mode of payment and perhaps shall never agree. I would not therefore have you Slip an opportunity of disposing of that Tract, if that price and the payment thereof is well secured. I would, as I think you have already been informed; be content with one fourth of the money paid down, the remainder in four annual payments with interest.

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I willing to take usual allowance of the Crops which were in the ground and hope you have taken your measures accordingly less than this, the Tenants cannot I should conceive think of giving, as the whole of them might have been demanded. I am, etc.1

1. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On September 16 Washington wrote short notes to Comte de Rochambeau, Maquis de Lafayette, and Marquis de Chastellux, introducing Charles Pinckney, of South Carolina. Copies of these notes are in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On September 17 Washington wrote briefly to Col. William Washington, inclosing the business card of the Philadelphia coach-maker who had repaired his carriage, recommending him. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To RICHARD NOBLE

Philadelphia, September 16, 1787.

Sir: By a letter which I have received from Major Thomas Freeman since I came to the City I am informed that he has lodged some money of mine in your hands, as also a receipt from Thomas Smith Esqr. for £533.19.0 with sundry other papers. I shall be obliged by your forwarding the money to me by the First good conveyance; the papers I beg you to place in the hands of Colo. Cannon of Washington County to whose care I had committed my business in that County long before I had any knowledge or information from Major Freeman of his having committed these matters to you. If no sure and safe conveyance should offer for sending the money immediately to me I request in that case that you would be so obliging as to deliver it to Thomas Smith Esqr. Attorney at Law who will apply it to the uses, and agreeable to the advice I have given. I am, etc.1

1. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Philadelphia, September 18, 1787.

My dear Marqs: In the midst of hurry, and in the moment of my departure from this City, I address this letter to you. The principal, indeed the only design of it, is to fulfil the promise I made, that I would send to you the proceedings of the Fœderal convention, as soon as the business was closed. More than this, circumstanced as I am at present, it is not in my power to do. nor am I inclined to attempt it, as the enclosure,⁵ must speak for itself, and will occupy your thoughts for some time.

It is the production of four months deliberation. It is now a Child of fortune, to be fostered by some and buffeted by others. what will be the General opinion on, or the reception of it, is not for me to decide, nor shall I say any thing for or against it: if it be good I suppose it will work its way good; if bad, it will recoil on the Framers. My best wishes attend you, and yours; and with the sincerest friendship and most Affectionate regard etc.⁶

5. The Constitutional Convention had Dunlap & Claypoole print 500 copies of the Constitution after it had been engrossed on parchment and signed. The inclosure above was, doubtless, one of these.

6. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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Washington left Philadelphia in the afternoon of September 18 for Mount Vernon, which he reached about sunset on Saturday the 22d.

To THOMAS JEFFERSON

Philadelphia, September 18, 1787.

Dear Sir: Yesterday put an end to the business of the Fœderal Convention. Inclosed is a copy of the Constitution by it agreed to, not doubting but that you have participated in the general anxiety which has agitated the minds of your Countrymen on this interesting occasion, I shall be excused I am certain for this endeavor to relieve you from it; especially when I assure you of the sincere regard and esteem with which I have the honor, etc.²

2. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PATRICK HENRY

Mount Vernon, September 24, 1787.

Dear Sir: In the first moment after my return I take the liberty of sending you a copy of the Constitution which the fœderal Convention has submitted to the People of these States. I accompany it with no observations; your own Judgment will at once discover the good, and the exceptionable parts of it. and your experience of the difficulties, which have ever arisen when attempts have been made to reconcile such variety of Interests and local prejudices as pervade the several States will render explanation unnecessary. I wish the Constitution which is offered had been made more perfect, but I sincerely believe it is the best that could be obtained at this time; and, as a Constitutional door is opened for amendment hereafter, the adoption of it under the present circumstances of the Union is in my opinion desirable.

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From a variety of concurring accounts it appears to me that the political concerns of this Country are, in a manner, suspended by a thread. That the Convention has been looked up to by the reflecting part of the community with

a solicitude which is hardly to be conceived, and that if nothing had been agreed on by that body, anarchy would soon have ensued, the seeds being richly [*sic*] sown in every soil. I am &c.8

To JOHNZEE SELLMAN

Mount Vernon, September 25, 1787.

Sir: As I observe by the Baltimore advertiser that you are Administrator of the later Mr. John Rawlins, I take the liberty to mention to you an error which happened in the payment of an order drawn by Rawlins upon me during my late absence from home, and which was not discovered till I pointed it out since my return from Philadelphia.

Sometime last fall I agreed with Mr. Rawlins to furnish me with a number of friezes and mouldings, for which I was to pay forty three pounds twelve Shillings Virginia Currency, but in consequence of some defect in the work, he afterwards wrote (which letter I have now by me) to me informing me that he should charge but forty five pounds Maryland currency, he furnished them accordingly; and in July last sent one Thomas Hammond to wash some stucco work, which was done by himself and Mr. Thorp,⁹ and gave him an order for the

8. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

This same letter was also sent to Benjamin Harrison and Thomas Nelson.

Henry answered (October 19): "I have to lament that I cannot bring my Mind to accord with the proposed Constitution The Concern I feel on this Account, is really greater than I am able to express. Perhaps mature Reflection may furnish me Reasons to change my

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present Sentiments into a Conformity with the Opinions of those personages For whom i have the highest Reverence.”

On October 4 Harrison replied: “I feel myself deeply interested in every thing that you have had a hand in, or that comes from you, and am so well assured of the solidity of your judgment, and the rectitude of your intentions, that i shall never stick at trifles to conform myself to your opinion; in the present instance, I am So totally uninform'd as to the general situation of America, that I can form no judgment of the necessity the convention was under to give us such a constitution as it has done; If our condition is not very desperate, I have my fears that the remedy will prove worse than the disease. Age makes men often over cautious; I am walling to attribute my fears to that cause, but from whatever source they spring, I cannot divest myself of an opinion, that the seeds of civil discord are plentifully sown in very many of the powers given both to the president and congress, and that if the constitution is carried into effect, the States south of the potowmac, will be little more than appendages to those to the northward of it....I shall only say, that my objections chiefly lay agst. the unlimited powers of taxation and the regulations of trade, and thee jurisdictions that are to be established in every State altogether independent of their laws, The sword, and such powers will; nay in the nature of things they must sooner or later, establish a tyranny, not inferior to the triumvirate or centum viri of Rome.” Both these letters are in the *Washington Papers*.

9. Tharp.

above forty five pounds, but did not mention in the order, whether it was Maryland or Virginia Currency. The person who paid the money (not recuring to Mr. Rawlins's agreement which was in the house) paid it in Virginia currency and took Mr. Hammonds receipt for the same, specifying virginia currency in the receipt.

I must therefore request Sir, that you will investigate the matter and have the difference of exchange in the above sum (which will be thirty dollars) returned. I am, etc.¹⁰

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10. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SAMUEL HANSON

Mount Vernon, September 27, 1787.

Sir: By your letter of the 23d., with which I have been favoured since my return home, I perceive there has been a misconception on my part of the transaction between you and Mr. Porter respecting payment for the board of my Nephews. it thus arose: in the enumeration of monies which remained for me to pay according to the account transmitted. I found the sum of £17. 10 due to Mr. Porter on your account, this, and the recollection (I believe I am not mistaken therein) finding the like sum paid by that Gentleman before any application had been made to me for it, led me to suppose (as I had requested you to apply to that Gentleman for such articles of Clothing as the boys really wanted) that application had been made to him for their board also which as no deposit was made in his hands to answer such demands, would had the case really been so have given him cause to think, strangely of me, this idea of mine was the cause of the letter you recd. from my nephew.

A draught in favor of Mr. Porter, or in behalf of any other Gentleman, is, unquestionably as proper as any other mode of application and will be equally agreeable to me.

For any particular care or attention which you have shewn, or may shew my Nephews I shall always think myself obliged

and thinking as I certainly have done, that the board was high I receive with pleasure the information of your intention of reducing it, for without intending a compliment I repeat the satisfaction I feel from the consideration of their being under the eye of a Gentleman so capable as you are of advising and exacting a proper conduct from them. I am, etc.11

To CHARLES PETTIT

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Mount Vernon, October 2, 1787.

Sir: By the charming Polly Capt. Ellwood¹⁴ I send you patterns for the hearths of Chimneys which I beg may be cast and sent to me by the first conveyance to Alexandria; the cost you will please to annex to the other plates, bespoke before I left the City,¹⁵ and the amount shall be paid when it is made known to, Sir, Yr. etc.¹⁶

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

14. Capt. John Ellwood, jr.

15. The "cast iron backs and jambs" were shipped from Philadelphia, November 6, at a total cost of £18:5: 1. The invoice is in the *Washington Papers*.

16. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To ROBERT MORRIS

Mount Vernon, October 2, 1787.

Dear Sir: By the charming Polly Capt. Ellwood I forward you a perfect model of the plough which was sent to me by Mr. Young with the direction of that Gentleman for setting it for use; from the character I have received of it, its performance surpasses any that has ever been tried before, on my Farms. I also send you a part of the summer wheat with which Mr. Young has furnished me as springing from seed sent by the Empress of Russia to his Britanic Majesty for the advantage it may have over other wheat I shall not vouch, to vary the seed time of this grain must, I conceive be its best recommendation, you will likewise receive part of the Sainfoin Seed I had come in, sufficient I think to sow a quarter of an acre in broad cast if good; and much more in drills. It is held in high estimation in England. the grass delights in dry soil. if it be stoney so much the better; Sow it without delay with wheat or Rye, or very early in the spring with Barley or Oats.

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My mind will ever retain warm, impressions of, and feel very sensibly the polite and friendly attentions I received from Mrs. Morris and yourself whilst I was in Philadelphia; to have opportunities of proving the sincerity of this declaration would give me much pleasure but in no place to the same degree as under this roof.

Mrs. Washington begs that you and Mrs. Morris will accept her respectful compliments and best wishes; mine in a particular and affectionate manner are added not only to you both but to all the young folks of the Family and to Govr. Morris¹⁷ Esqr. I am, etc.

P.S. Will you be so obliging as to give me your process for preparing the Duck wheat straw for fodder. The effects of the drought with me has exceeded anything I could have conceived and has driven me to even substitute for Hay. It is possible I may avail myself of your kind offer of sending for India Paper for my new Room but presuming there is no opportunity to do it soon; I shall not, at this time give you the demensions of it.¹⁸

To GOVERNOR WILLIAM SMALLWOOD

Mount Vernon, October 6, 1787.

Dear Sir: When I had the honor of being at your house last Fall, you gave me some reason to believe that you would become the purchaser of my land adjoining yours, in Charles County, and, if I

17. Gouverneur Morris.

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

recollect rightly, was to have written to me on that Subject from Annapolis.

I am still disposed to part with this land; and I should be glad if you could make it convenient to be the purchaser thereof. I told you in the convention we had on this subject that I would endeavour to make the payments as easy as my own circumstances would

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admit, this I repeat. and if you have corn to dispose of, at a moderate price, I would take at least 500 Barrells in payment and wheat (if good, clean, and free from the Fly) delivered at my Mill, to which Boats can come, at the Cash price in Alexandria, your answer by the bearer would much oblige Dr. Sir, Yr. etc.19

To GEORGE MASON

Mount Vernon, October 7, 1787.

Dear Sir: Doctr. Stuart whom I have seen since his return from Gunston informs me (of what indeed you had done before) that your Crop of Corn is very short, and that you had it in contemplation to draw a supply from No. Carolina where it might be had cheap.

My crop is much below what

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

I had conceived, even from the distressing accounts which were handed to me, I much doubt whether the aid of 300 Barrels will be more than sufficient to carry me thro' the year. If therefore you have matured any plan by which my adding 500 barrels would be the means of facilitating, I should be glad to be informed of it. In that case, if I can see my way to obtain the money (necessary for the payment) I would gladly join you.

I am sorry to hear you met with an accident on your return. I hope you experience no ill effect from it. The family join me in compliments and good wishes to you, Mrs. Mason and Family. I am, etc.19

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, October 10, 1787.

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My dear Sir: I thank you for your letter of the 30th ulto. It came by the last Post. I am better pleased that the proceedings of the Convention are submitted from Congress by a unanimous vote (feeble as it is) than if they

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

had appeared under strong marks of approbation without it. This apparent unanimity will have its effect. Not every one has opportunities to peep behind the curtain; and as the multitude are often deceived by externals, the appearance of unanimity in that body on this occasion will be of great importance. The political tenets of Colo. M.²⁰ and Colo. R. H. L.²¹ are always in unison. It may be asked which of them gives the tone. Without hesitation I answer, the latter; because I believe the latter will receive it from no one. He has I am informed rendered himself obnoxious in Philadelphia by the pains he took to disseminate his objections amongst some of the leaders of the seceding members of the Legislature of that State. His conduct is not less reprobated in this Country. How it will be relished generally is yet to be learnt, by me.

As far as accounts have been received from the Sn. and Wt.²² Counties the sentiment with respect to the proceedings of the Convention is favourable. Whether the knowledge of this, or conviction of the impropriety of withholding the Constitution from State conventions has worked most in the breast of Colo. M. I will not decide, but the fact is, he has declared unequivocally (in a letter to me) for its going to the People. Had his sentiments however been opposed to the measure, his instructions (for the delegates of this Country are so instructed) would have compelled him to vote for it. yet I have no doubt but that his

20. Col. George Mason.

21. Col. Richard Henry Lee.

22. Southern and western.

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assent will be accompanied by the most tremendous apprehensions which the highest coloring can give to his objections. To alarm the people seems to be the groundwork of his plan. The want of a qualified Navigation act is already declared to be a mean by which the price of produce in the Southern States will be reduced to nothing, and will become monopoly of the Eastern and northern States. To enumerate the whole of his objections²³ is unnecessary, because they are detailed in the address of the seceding members of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, which no doubt you have seen.

I scarcely think any powerful opposition will be made to the Constitutions being submitted to a Convention of this State. if it is given, it will be there at which I hope you will make it convt. to be present. explanations will be wanting, and none can give them with more accuracy and propriety than yourself. The sentiments of Mr. Henry with respect to the Constitution are not known, in these parts. Mr. Jos. Jones (who it seems was in Alexandria before the Convention broke up) was of opinion, that they would not be inimical to the proceedings of it; others think as the advocate of a paper emission he cannot be friendly to them.

23. These objections were published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* Oct. 4, 1787.

From circumstances, which have been related, it is conjectured that the Governor²⁴ wishes he had been among the subscribing members, but Time will disclose more than we know at present with respect to the whole of the business, and when I hear more, I will write to you again. In the mean while I pray you to be assured of the sincere regard and affection with which &c.

P.S. Having received, (in a letter) from Colo Mason, a detail, in writing of his objections to the proposed Constitution,²⁵ I enclose you a copy of them.²⁶

To DAVID HUMPHREYS

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Mount Vernon, October 10, 1787.

My dear Humphreys: Your favor of the 28th. Ult. came duly to hand, as did the former of June. With great pleasure I received the intimation of your spending the winter under this Roof. The invitation was not less sincere, than the reception will be cordial. The only stipulations I shall contend for are, that in all things you shall do as you please: I will do the same; and that no ceremony may be used

24. Edmund Randolph.

25. Mason's letter of October 7 and his abstract of objections to the Constitution are in the *Washington Papers*.

26. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

or any restraint be imposed on any one.

The Constitution that is submitted is not free from imperfections. but there are as few radical defects in it as could well be expected considering the heterogenous mass of which the Convention was composed and the diversity of interests that are to be attended to. As a Constitutional door is opened for future amendments and alterations, I think it would be wise in the People to accept what is offered to them and I wish it may be by as great a majority of them as it was by that of the Convention; but this is hardly to be expected because the importance and sinister views of too many characters, will be affected by the change. Much will depend however upon literary abilities, and the recommendation of it by good pens should be *openly*, I mean, publicly afforded in the Gazettes. Go matters however as they may, I shall have the consolation to reflect that no objects but the public good, and that peace and harmony which I wished to see prevail in the Convention, obtruded even for a moment in my bosom during the whole Session long as it was. what reception this State will give to the proceedings in all its extent of territory,

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is more than I can inform you of; in these parts it is advocated beyond my expectation; the great opposition

(if great there should be) will come from the Southern and Western Counties from whence I have not as yet, received any accts. that are to be depended on.

I condole with you on the loss of your Parents; but as they lived to a good old age you could not be unprepared for the shock, tho' it is painful to bid an everlasting adieu to those we love, or revere. Reason, Religion and Philosophy may soften the anguish of it, but time alone can eradicate it.

As I am beginning to look for you, I shall add no more in this letter but the wishes of the Family and the affectionate regards &c.27

To CHARLES PETTIT

Mount Vernon, October 4, 1787.

Sir: The enclosed ought to have accompanied the letter and the box by Capt. Ellwood. That it did not was an omission.

In addition to the Plates there written for, let me request two others; three feet nine each square, I want them for a Green house and would have quite plain and full as thick as they are *usually* cast for Chimney

27. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

backs. I am, etc.18

To HENRY KNOX

Mount Vernon, October 15, 1787.

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My Dear Sir: Your favor of the 3d. came duly to hand. The fourth day after leaving Philadelphia I reached home²⁸ and found Mrs. Washington and the Family tolerably well, but the fruits of the Earth almost entirely destroyed by one of the severest droughts (in this neighborhood) that has ever been experienced. The Crops, pretty generally, have been injured in this State below the Mountains, but not to the degree that mine, and some others in a small circle around me, have suffered.

The Constitution is now before the Judgment Seat. It has, as was expected, its adversaries and supporters. Which will preponderate is yet to be decided: the former, more than probably will be most active, as the major part of them will, it is to be feared, be governed by sinister and self important motives, to which every thing in their breasts must

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

28. See footnote 7 to letter to Clement Biddle, Sept. 19, 1787, *ante*.

yield. The opposition from another class of them may perhaps, (if they should be men of reflection, candour, and information) subside in the solution of the following simple questions. i. Is the Constitution which is submitted by the Convention preferable to the Government (if it can be called one) under which we now live? 2. Is it probable that more confidence would at the time be placed in another Convention, provided the experiment should be tried, than was placed in the last one, and is it likely that a better agreement would take place therein? 3. What would be the consequences if these should not happen, or even from the delay, which must inevitably follow such an experiment? Is there not a Constitutional door open for alterations or amendments? and is it not likely that real defects will be as readily discovered after as before trial; and will not our successors be as ready to apply the remedy as ourselves if occasion should require it? To think otherwise will, in my Judgment, be ascribing more of the amor patria, more wisdom and more virtue, to ourselves, than I think we deserve.

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It is highly probable that the refusal of our Govr. and Colo. Mason to subscribe to the proceedings of the Convention will have a bad effect in this State; for, as you well observe, they *must* not only assign reasons for the Justification of their own conduct, but it is highly probable that these reasons will be clothed in most terrific array for the purpose of alarming; some things

are already addressed to the fears of the people and will no doubt have their effect. As far however as the sense of *this* part of the Country has been taken, it is strongly in favor of the proposed Constitution; Further I cannot speak with precision. If a powerful opposition is given to it, the weight thereof will, I apprehend, come from the South side of James River and from the Western Counties. I am, &c.29

***To DAVID STUART**

Mount Vernon, October 17, 1787.

Dear Sir: As the enclosed Advertiser contains a speech of Mr. Wilson's (as able, candid, and honest a Member as any in Convention) which will place the most of Col. Mason's objections in their true point of light, I send it to you. The re-publications (if you can get it done) will be of service at this juncture. His ipso facto objection

29. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

does not, I believe, require an answer; every mind must recoil at the idea. And with respect to the Navigation Act, I am mistaken if any three men, bodies of men, or Countries, will enter into any compact or treaty if *one* of the three is to have a negative controul over the other two. There must be reciprocity or no Union, which is preferable will not become a question in the Mind of any true patriot. But granting it to be an evil, it will infallibly work its own cure, and an ultimate advantage to the Southern States. Sincerely and Affectly, I am etc.30

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*To ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Mount Vernon, October 18, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your favor without date came to my hand by the last Post. It is with unfeigned concern I perceive that a political dispute has arisen between Governor Clinton and yourself. For both of you I have the highest esteem and regard. But as you say it is insinuated by some of your political adversaries, and may obtain credit, "that you *palmed* yourself upon me, and was *dismissed* from my family;" and call upon me to do you justice by a recital of the facts. I do therefore, explicitly declare, that both

30. From a photostat of the original in the *Washington Papers*.

charges are entirely unfounded. With respect to the first, I have no cause to believe that you took a single step to accomplish, or had the most distant idea of receiving, an appointment in my family 'till you were invited thereto. And, with respect to the second, that your quitting it was altogether the effect of your own choice.

When the situation of this Country calls loudly for unanimity and vigor, it is to be lamented that Gentlemen of talents and character should disagree in their sentiments for promoting the public weal; but unfortunately, this ever has been, and most probably ever will be the case, in the affairs of man.

Having scarcely been from home since my return from Philadelphia, I can give but little information with respect to the *general* reception of the New Constitution in *this* State. In Alexandria however, and some of the adjacent Counties, it has been embraced with an enthusiastic warmth of which I had no conception. I expect notwithstanding, violent opposition will be given to it by *some* characters of weight and influence, in the State. Mrs. Washington unites with me in best wishes for Mrs. Hamilton and yourself. I am &c.31

31. From the original in the *Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

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***To JAMES MADISON**

Mount Vernon, October 22, 1787.

My dear Sir: When I wrote to you, I was uninformed of the Sentiments of this State beyond the circle of Alexandria, with respect to the New Constitution. Since, a letter which I received by the last Post, dated the 16th, from a member of the assembly, contains the following paragraphs.

I believe such an instance has not happened before, since the revolution, that there should be a house on the first day of the Session, and business immediately taken up. This was not only the case on Monday, but there was a full house; when Mr. Prentice³² was called up to the Chair, as Speaker, there being no opposition. Thus, the Session has commenced peaceably.

It gives me much pleasure to inform you that the sentiments of the members are infinitely more favourable to the Constitution than the most zealous advocates for it could have expected. I have not met with one in all my enquiries (and I have made them with great diligence) opposed to it, except Mr. Henry, who I have heard is so, but could only conjecture it, from a conversation with him on the subject. Other members who have also been active in their enquiries tell me, that they have met with *none* opposed to it.

32. Joseph Prentis (Prentice).

It is said however that old Mr. Cabell of Amherst disapproves of it. Mr. Nicholas has declared himself a warm friend to it. The transmissory note of Congress was before us to day, when Mr. Henry declared that it transcended our powers to decide on the Constitution; that it must go before a Convention. As it was insinuated he would aim at preventing this, much pleasure was discovered at the declaration.

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Thursday next (the 25th.) is fixed upon for taking up the question of calling the Convention, and fixing the time of its meeting: In the meantime, five thousand copies are ordered to be printed, to be dispersed by the members in their respective Counties for the information of the People. I cannot forbear mentioning that the Chancellor, Pendleton, espouses the Constitution so warmly as to declare he will give it his aid in the Convention, if his health will permit. As there are few better judges of such subjects, this must be deemed a fortunate circumstance.³³

As the above quotations is the sum of my information, I shall add nothing more on the subject of the proposed government, at this time.

Mr. C. Pinkney is unwilling

33. This letter is from Benjamin Harrison, and is in the *Washington Papers*.

(I perceive by the enclosures contained in your letter of the 13th.) to loose any fame that can be acquired by the publication of his sentiments. If the discussion of the navigation of the Mississippi *could* have remained as silent, and glided as gently down the Stream of time for a few years, as the waters do, that are contained within the banks of that river, it would, I confess, have comported more with my ideas of sound policy than any decision the case can obtain at this juncture. With sentiments the most Affecte. and friendly &c.

To FRANCIS MENTGES

Mount Vernon, October 27, 1787.

Sir: In answer to your favor of the 12th. I shall inform you that without unpacking my public Papers (which would be very troublesome to me as they are voluminous and in a variety of [places] I cannot ascertain with *precision* the commencement of your superintendance of the Hospital in Williamsburg; and if these were to be unpacked I might not come at the

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date of your recall from this duty. I should suppose you acted under written orders in both cases, these therefore will

go fully to the points you want to establish.

That you must have taken charge of the Hospital in Williamsburg at the time you say, viz, the 5th. of November 1781, can I believe, admit of no doubt as all the distributions were then making and as far as the recollection of circumstances will aid me, I think you must have remained on that duty till the latter part of the spring following. If this testimony of the matter, and a thorough persuasion of your having discharged the trust reposed in you with intelligence and fidelity can avail your case this certificate may be adduced from. I am, etc.³⁴

To MATHEW CAREY

Mount Vernon, October 29, 1787.

Sir: The last post brought me your letter of the 22d. your application to me for the loan of £100 is an evidence of your unacquaintedness with my inability to lend money. To be candid, my expenditures are never behind my income, and

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

this year (occasioned by the severest drouth that ever was known in this neighborhood) instead of selling grain which heretofore has been my principal source of revenue it is not £500 that will purchase enough for the support of my family. after this disclosure of my situation you will be readily persuaded that inclination to serve without the means of accomplishing it, is of little avail. This however is the fact so far as it respects the point in question.

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As you seem anxious that the contents of your letter should not be known I put it in your own power to destroy it by returning it under the same cover with this.

I wish success to your Museum and am &c.35

To JAMES WOOD

Mount Vernon, October 29, 1787.

Dr. Sir: I beg you to accept my thanks for the friendly information contained in your letter of the 20th. Instt. but from an entire unacquaintedness with business of the land office, since the alterations which have taken place consequent of the Revolution, I really know not how to avail myself of it.

35. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

The case you allude to is, on the 2d. of April 1752. I surveyed for one Thomas Mullen (under authority of the Proprs. Office) a tract of waste land in Frederick County, lying on the timber ridge near great Cacapon head of Smiths run, 400 acres Extending So. W 320 to 3 hicy. in a hollow near a drain, No. Wt. 200 poles to 3 black Oaks on a ridge No. Et. 320 poles to a black Oak and 2 White Oaks on a ridge, So. Et. 200 poles to the beginning, containing as above 400 Acres; for making this Survey I received no compensation. indeed at *that* time it was done, the Land was (by others) thoughr. inadequate to the Fee, and that Mullen was a madman. soon after this Mullen, who was a single man, and I believe without connections, ran away and finding no prospect of getting paid by him I caveated the Land intending if no near or better claimant should appear to obtain a patent in my own name. In this situation I *presume* it lay till I was called from home in the year 1775 afterwards, and till you had the goodness to remind me of the transaction never once occurred to my recollection. If under this statement which I believe is candid and accurate, it shall be thought that

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my right to the land is preferable or equal to that of any other, I should be glad to Obtn. it; if not I shall rest contented; your advice and assistance (if proper) would be esteemed a further mark of your Friendship. With great regard etc.³⁶

To ARCHIBALD JOHNSTON

Mount Vernon, October 30, 1787.

Sir: My fixed determination is, that no person whatever shall hunt upon my grounds or waters. To grant leave to one, and refuse another, would not only be drawing a line of discrimination which would be offensive, but would subject one to great inconvenience; for my strict, and positive orders to all my people are, if they hear a gun fired upon my Land to go immediately in pursuit of it. Permission therefore to any one would keep them either always in pursuit, or make them inattentive to my orders under the supposition of its belonging to a licensed person by which means I should be obtruded upon by others who to my cost I find had other objects in view. Besides, as I have not lost my relish for this sport when I can find time to indulge myself in it, and Gentlemen who come to the House are pleased

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Paper*.

with it, it is my wish not to have the game within my jurisdiction disturbed. For these reasons I beg you will not take my refusal amiss, because I would give the same to my brother if he lived off my land. I am, &c.³⁷

***To ARTHUR YOUNG**

Mount Vernon, November 1, 1787.

Sir: Your favor of the 1st. of Feby. came to hand about the middle of May last. An absence of more than four months from home, will be the best apology I can make for my silence

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'till this time. The Grain, Grass-seeds, Ploughs &ca. arrived at the same time agreeable to the list; but some of the former were injured (as will always be the case) by being put into the hold of the Vessel; however, upon the whole they were in much better order than those things are generally found to be, when brought across the Atlantic.

I am at a loss, Sir, how to express the sense which I have of your

37. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

particular attention to my commissions; and the very obliging manner in which you offer me your services in any matters relating to Agriculture, that I may have to transact in England. If my warmest thanks will in any measure compensate e for these favors, I must beg you to accept of them. I shall always be exceedingly happy to hear from you, and shall very readily and chearfully give you any information relative to the state of Agriculture in this Country, that I am able.

I did myself the honor to hand the set of Annals to the Agriculture Society in Philadelphia, which you sent to that body, through me. The President wrote a letter to you expressive of the sense they entertained of the favor which you did them; and mentioned therein the effects of some experiments which had been made with Plaster of Paris, as a manure; I intended to have given you an acct. of it myself, as I find the subject is touched upon in your Annals, but this letter has precluded the necessity of it. The 5th. volume of the Annals wch. was committed to the care of Mr. Athawes for me, did not come to hand till sometime after I had received the 6th.

The quantity of Sainfoin which you sent me was fully sufficient to answer my purpose; I have sown part of it, but find that it comes up very thin, which is likewise the case with the Winter Wheat, and some other Seeds which I have sown.

I have a high opinion of Beans as a preparation for wheat, and shall enter as largely upon the cultivation of them next year, as the

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quantity of seed I can procure, will admit.

I am very glad that you did not engage a ploughman for me at the high wages which you mention, for I agree with you, that that single circumstance, exclusive of the others which you enumerated, is sufficiently objectionable.

I have tried the Ploughs which you sent me and find that they answer the description which you gave me of them; this is contrary to the opinion of almost every one who saw them before they were used, for it was thought their great weight would be an insuperable objection to their being drawn by two Horses.

I am now preparing materials to build a Barn precisely agreeable to your plan, which I think an excellent one.

Before I undertake to give the information you request respecting the arrangements of farms in this neighborhood &ca. I must observe that there is, perhaps, scarcely any part of America where farming has been less attended to than in this State. The cultivation of Tobacco has been almost the sole object with men of landed property, and consequently a regular course of crops have never been in view. The general custom has been, first to raise a Crop of Indian Corn (maize), which,

according to the mode of cultivation, is a good preparation for wheat; then a crop of wheat, after which the ground is respited (except from weeds, and every trash that can contribute to its foulness) for about eighteen months; and so on, alternately, without any dressing; till the land is exhausted; when it is turned out without being sown with grass seeds, or any method taken to restore it; and another piece is ruined in the same manner. No more cattle is raised than can be supported by lowland meadows, swamps, &ca.; and the tops and blades of Indian Corn; as very few persons have attended to sowing grasses, and connecting cattle with their Crops. The Indian corn is the chief support of the labourers and

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horses. Our lands, as I mentioned in my first letter to you, were originally very good; but use, and abuse, have made them quite otherwise.

The above is the mode of cultivation wch. has been generally pursued here, but the System of husbandry which has been found so beneficial in England, and which must be greatly promoted by your valuable Annals, is now gaining ground; There are several (among which I may class myself), who are endeavouring to get into your regular and systematic course of cropping as fast as the nature of the business will admit; so that I hope in the course of a few years, we shall make a more respectable figure as farmers than we have hitherto done.

I will, agreeable to your desire, give you the prices of our products as nearly as I am able, but you will readily conceive from the foregoing

acct., that they cannot be given with any precision. Wheat for the four last years will average about 4/. sterlg pr Bushl. of 8 Gallns. Rye abt. 2/4. Oats #. Beans, Pease &ca., have not been sold in any quantities. Barley is not made here, from a prevailing opinion that the climate is not adapted to it, I, however, in opposition to prejudice, sowed about 50 Bushl. last Spring and found that it yielded a proportionate quantity with any other kind of grain which I sowed; I might add more. Cows may be bought at abt. £3 Sterlg per head. Cattle for the slaughter vary from 2¼ to 4½ sterlg pr. lb; the former being the currt. price in summer, the latter in the winter or Spring. Sheep at 12/. sterlg. pr. head, and wool at abt. 1/. Sterlg pt. lb. I am not able to give you the price of labour as the land is cultivated here wholly by Slaves, and the price of labour in the Towns is fluctuating, and governed altogether by circumstances.

Give me leave to repeat my thanks for your attention to me, and your polite offer to execute any business relating to husbandry, which I may have in England; and to assure you that I shall not fail to apply to you for whatever I may have occasion for in that line. I am etc.

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PS. I observe in the 6th. Volume of your Annals, there is a plate and description of Mr. Winlaws Mill for seperating the grain from the heads of Corn.³⁸ Its utility or inutility has, undoubtedly, been reduced to a certainty before this time; if it possesses all the properties and advantages mentioned in the description, and you can, from your own knowledge, or such information as you *entirely* rely on, recommend it as a useful machine, where labourers are scarce, I should be much obliged to you to procure one for me (to be paid for, and forwarded by Mr. Welch, provided it is so simple in its construction as to be worked by ignorant persons without danger of being spoiled (for such only will manage it here) and the price of it, does not exceed £15 as mentioned in the Annals, or thereabouts.³⁹

***To GEORGE MASON AND DAVID STUART**

Mount Vernon, November 4, 1787.

Gentn: In consequence of a resolution which passed at the last meeting of the Potomk. Company, and in behalf of the Directors, I transmit the enclosed petition to you, for the consideration of your Honble. House. The Petition is short. We therefore rely on you, if the sentiment shall meet your approbation, for argument in support of it; begging at the sametime (as the *sole* end is to obtain a more

38. Among the undated manuscripts at the end of the *Washington Papers* is a plan and description of a rolling mill signed by Lawrence Taliaferro.

39. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

summary mode of recovering the dividends) that you would make such alterations (keeping the object in view) as will entitle it to a favourable reception.

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It is, I believe, almost needless to add, that unless some relief is afforded by the Assembly in this instance, that the work will soon stop. The delinquences are great, and the legal process to enforce payment so low, that it seems *almost* endless and unavailing to attempt it by the mode prescribed by the act of incorporation. Under these circumstances the *willing* members are discouraged; and too good a pretext is afforded to a third class, who are neither punctual in their payments, nor yet *very great* delinquents, to with-hold the dividends which have already been required, and to oppose fresh calls, till the old arrearages are paid up. The consequences of all this is easily to be foreseen, if no redress can be had from the quarter it is solicited.

Whatever may be the fate of the Petition, I do, in behalf of the board pray, that you would give me the earliest advice of it; because a similar application must be made (but at present it is suspended) to the Assembly of Maryland, when I shall have heard from you on this subject, that the

Acts may be in unison. With very great esteem etc.

[H.S.P.]

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, November 5, 1787.

Sir: Presuming that it may have been from the want of your knowing of a safe conveyance that I am not furnished with the sum promised me by you at Philadelphia, I shall be glad to know by return of the Post when I may send for it.

Had you been so good as have favoured me with it by Genl. Pickney or Mr. Houston who stopped at annapolis and took this in their way to the Southward, or by any of the many opportunities to Alexa. it would have saved me the expence of a special messenger, the cost of which will, it is probable, sink the Interest of the sum which shall be received if not

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larger than was promised, but this the exigency of my calls will oblige me to submit to. I am, etc.⁴¹

41. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To DAVID STUART**

Mount Vernon, November 5, 1787.

Dear Sir: I thank you for the communications in your letters of the 16th and 26th ult., both of which came safe. It gives me pleasure to hear that the Assembly has sent the Constitution to a Convention by an unanimous vote, unstamped with marks of disapprobation. If Mr. Charles Lee however, has been able to form a just opinion of the sentiments of the Country with respect to it, it is, that the Major voice is opposed to it, particularly in the Southern and Western parts of the State. Is this your opinion, from what you have seen, heard and understood?

Maryland, tho' the Assembly has not yet met (from which source anything can have been drawn) is, we are told, exceedingly well disposed to the adoption of it. Nay further, that Mr. Chase⁴² is become a convert to it. The accts. from the States, Northward and Eastward speak the same language, though the papers team with declamation against it, by a few. A paper in favor of it, written, as I am informed by, or under the auspices of Mr. Wilson,⁴³ in numbers, I herewith send you.

With respect to the payment of British debts, I would fain hope (let the eloquence or abilities of any man, or set of men, in opposition be what they may) that the good sense

42. Samuel Chase.

43. James Wilson.

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of this Country will never suffer a violation of a public treaty, nor pass acts of injustice to Individuals. Honesty in States, as well as Individuals will ever be found the soundest policy.

We have nothing new in this quarter. The Constitution which is submitted, seems to have absorbed all lesser matters. Mrs. Stuart (who had got very well) and your two little girls went from this on Tuesday last, for Chotank, under the escort of your brother; and the wind being high kept the Potomack on their left to ensure their journey.

I must engage *absolutely* , Six hundred barrels of Corn. Less, I am sure will not carry me through the year. Had I the money or was I certain of getting it in time (but this is not to be depended upon) I might, as I am informed through different channels, engage my quantity on very moderate terms on the Eastern shore of Maryland. But as I dare leave nothing to chance, I must take it from Mr. Henly. The price, as it is ready money to me, will I expect, be proportioned thereto. It will not be safe to remove the Corn until after January, as it does not get sufficiently dry to lye in bulk sooner. The last I had from Yorktown got damaged in spite of every exertion in my power to save it. And I must entreat as I shall give Mr. Henly timely notice of my sending that it may be beat out on plank floors, and in a dry house; otherwise it will contract dampness, which will render its preservation precarious even at that Season.

I beg also that he may be clear

and decided with respect to his furnishing me with the quantity I want, viz. Six hundred Barrels; for I must meet with no disappointment of what is engaged.

Herewith is a letter jointly to Col. Mason and yourself on the business of the Pork Company. With great esteem and sincere regards etc.44

To CHARLES THOMSON

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Mount Vernon, November 10, 1787.

Sir: In compliance with the resolve of Congress contained in your letter of the 27 Ultó. I have the honor of sending you a copy of the paper enclosed in Mr. President Laurens letter to me of the 19th. of February 1778; endorsed "Committees report."⁴⁶

It would, I confess, give me a great pleasure to hear that the important Services of the Baron de Steuben had met with a reward adequate to his merits and sacrafices. what may have been his verbal or other engagements with Congress is not for me to say further than is contained in the paper herewith

44. From a photostat of the original in the "Washington Photostats."

46. "Committee of conference with Baron Steuben." (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Oct. 25, 1787, and Jan. 22, 1788.)

enclosed but certain it is he hazarded his life and fortune at a critical period of our affairs without those obligations on his part which impelled Americans to do it and from that moment to the close of the war, rendered essential Services to the cause in which we were engaged.

I embrace this, as I shall do every occasion of expressing to you the esteem and regard with which I am, etc.⁴⁷

To BARON STEUBEN

Mount Vernon, November 10, 1787.

Sir: The letter with which you were pleased to honor me, dated the 26th. Ultó. came duly to hand, by the same Post I received a letter from Mr. Secretary Thompson, requesting, by order of Congress, a Copy of the Report of a Committee which was transmitted to me by

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Mr. President Laurens in Feby. 1778. This is accordingly sent and is the counterpart of the Paper I herewith enclose for your own information.

As I do not recollect ever to have had any further information of the contract you speak of than what is therein contained, it is not in my power to speak more fully to the point;

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

but in my letter to the Secretary I have expressed in unequivocal terms a wish that your merits and Sacrafices may be rewarded to your entire satisfaction. If they should not and it proves a means of your withdrawing from the United States, I shall be among the number of those who will regret the event, as it would give me pleasure that you should continue in a Country the liberties of which owe much to your Services. I have the honor, etc.48

***To ALEXANDER HAMILTON**

Mount Vernon, November 10, 1787.

Dear Sir: I thank you for the Pamphlet and for the Gazette contained in your letter of the 30th Ult. For the remaining numbers of Publius, I shall acknowledge myself obliged, as I am persuaded the subject will be well handled by the Author.49

The new Constitution has, as the public prints will have informed you, been handed to the people of this state by a unanimous vote of the Assembly;

48. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

49. Hamilton was "Publius." These essays by him, John Jay, and James Madison, who also used the same pseudonym, have come to be known as "The Federalist."

but it is not to be inferred from hence that its opponants are silenced; on the contrary, there are many, and some powerful ones. Some of whom, it is said by overshooting the

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mark, have lessened their weight: be this as it may, their assiduity stands unrivalled, whilst the friends to the Constitution content themselves with barely avowing their approbation of it. Thus stands the matter with us, at present; yet, my opinion is, that the Major voice is favourable.

Application has been made to me by Mr. Secretary Thompson (by order of Congress) for a copy of the report, of a Committee, which was appointed to confer with the Baron de Steuben on his first arrival in this Country; forwarded to me by Mr. President Laurens. This I have accordingly sent. It throws no other light on the subject than such as are to be derived from the disinterested conduct of the Baron. No terms are made by him "nor will he accept of any thing but with general approbation." I have however, in my letter enclosing this report to the Secretary, taken occasion to express an unequivocal wish, that Congress would reward the Baron for his Services, sacrifices and merits, to his entire satisfaction. It is the only way in which I could bring my Sentiments before that honble. body, as it has been an established principle with me, to ask nothing from it. With very great esteem and regard etc.⁵⁰

50. From the original in the *Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, November 10, 1787.

Dear Bushrod: In due course of Post, your letters of the 19th. and 26th. Ult. came to hand and I thank you for the communications therein; for a continuation in matters of importance, I shall be obliged to you. That the Assembly would afford the People an opportunity of deciding on the proposed Constitution I had scarcely a doubt, the only question with me was, whether it would go forth under favourable auspices, or receive the stamp of disapprobation. The opponents I expected, (for it ever has been that the adversaries to a measure are more active than its Friends) would endeavor to stamp it with unfavourable impressions, in order to bias the Judgment that is ultimately to decide

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on it, this is evidently the case with the writers in opposition, whose objections are better calculated to alarm the fears, than to convince the Judgment, of their readers. They build their objections upon principles that do not exist, which the Constitution does not support them in, and the existence of which has been, by an appeal to the Constitution itself flatly denied; and then, as if they were unanswerable, draw all the dreadful consequences that are necessary to alarm the apprehensions of

the ignorant or unthinking. It is not the interest of the major part of those characters to be convinced; nor will their local views yield to arguments, which do not accord with their present, or future prospects.

A Candid solution of a single question to which the plainest understanding is competent does, in my opinion, decide the dispute: namely is it best for the States to unite, or not to unite? If there are men who prefer the latter, then unquestionably the Constitution which is offered must, in their estimation, be wrong from the words, we the People to the signature inclusively; but those who think differently and yet object to parts of it, would do well to consider that it does not lye with any *one* State, or the *minority* of the States to superstruct a Constitution for the whole. The separate interests, as far as it is practicable, must be consolidated; and local views must be attended to, as far as the nature of the case will admit. Hence it is that every State has some objection to the present form and these objections are directed to different points. that which is most pleasing to one is obnoxious to another, and so vice versa. If then the Union of the whole is a desirable object, the componant parts must yield a little in order to accomplish it. Without the latter, the former is unattainable, for again I repeat it, that not a single State nor the minority of the States can force a Constitution on the Majority; but admitting the power it will surely be granted that it cannot be done without involving scenes of civil commotion

of a very serious nature let the opponents of the proposed Constitution in this State be asked, and it is a question they certainly ought to have asked themselves, what line of conduct they would advise it to adopt, if nine other States, of which I think there is little

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doubt, should accede to the Constitution? would they recommend that it should stand single? Will they connect it with Rhode Island? or even with two others checkerwise and remain with them as outcasts from the Society, to shift for themselves? or will they return to their dependence on Great Britain? or lastly, have the mortification to come in when they will be allowed no credit for doing so?

The warmest friends and the best supporters the Constitution has, do not contend that it is free from imperfections; but they found them unavoidable and are sensible, if evil is likely to arise there from, the remedy must come hereafter; for in the present moment, it is not to be obtained; and, as there is a Constitutional door open for it, I think the People (for it is with them to Judge) can as they will have the advantage of experience on their Side, decide with as much propriety on the alterations and amendments which are necessary [as] ourselves. I do not think we are more inspired, have

more wisdom, or possess more virtue, than those who will come after us.

The power under the Constitution will always be in the People. It is entrusted for certain defined purposes, and for a certain limited period, to representatives of their own choosing; and whenever it is executed contrary to their Interest, or not agreeable to their wishes, their Servants can, and undoubtedly will be, recalled. It is agreed on all hands that no government can be well administered without powers; yet the instant these are delegated, altho' those who are entrusted with the administration are no more than the creatures of the people, act as it were but for a day, and are amenable for every false step they take, they are, from the moment they receive it, set down as tyrants; their natures, one would conceive from this, immediately changed, and that they could have no other disposition but to oppress. Of these things, in a government constituted and guarded as *ours* is, I have no idea; and do firmly believe that whilst many *ostensible* reasons are assigned to prevent the adoption of it, the real ones are concealed behind the Curtain, because they are not of a nature to appear in open day. I believe further, supposing them pure, that as great evils result from too great Jealousy as from the want of it. We need look I think no

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further for proof of this, than to the Constitution, of some if not all of these States. No man is a warmer advocate for proper restraints and wholesome checks in every department of government than I am; but I have never

yet been able to discover the propriety of placing it absolutely out of the power of men to render essential Services, because a possibility remains of their doing ill.

If Mr. Ronald can place the Finances of this Country upon so respectable a footing as he has intimated, he will deserve much of its thanks. In the attempt, my best wishes, I have nothing more to offer, will accompany him. I hope there remains virtue enough in the Assembly of this State to preserve inviolate public treaties and private Contracts; if these are infringed, farewell to respectability and safety in the Government.

I have possessed a doubt, but if any had existed in my breast, reiterated proofs would have convinced me of the impolicy of *all* commutable Taxes. If we cannot learn wisdom from experience, it is hard to say where it is to be found. But why talk of learning it; these things are *mere* Jobs by which few are enriched at the public expense; for whether premeditation, or ignorance, is the cause of this destructive scheme, it ends in oppression.

You have I find broke the Ice; the only advice I will offer to you on the occasion (if you have a mind to command the attention of the House) is to speak seldom, but to important Subjects, except such

as particularly relate to your Constituents, and, in the former case make yourself *perfectly* master of the Subject. Never exceed a *decent* warmth, and submit your sentiments with diffidence. A dictatorial Stile, though it may carry conviction, is always accompanied with disgust. I am, &c.51

To SAMUEL VAUGHAN

Mount Vernon, November 12, 1787.

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Dear Sir: The letter without date, with which you were pleased to honor me, accompanied by a plan of this Seat, came to my hands by the last Post. For both I pray you to accept my sincere and hearty thanks. The plan describes with accuracy the houses, walks, and shrubberies etc. except in the front of the Lawn, west of the Ct.yard. There the plan differs from the original; in the former you have closed the prospect with trees along the walk to the gate; whereas in the latter the trees terminate with two mounds of earth on each side of which grow Weeping Willows leaving an open and full view of the distant woods. The mounds are at sixty yards apart. I

51. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

mention this, because it is the only departure from the origl.

Altho' I can have little doubt of the pleasure you must feel at the prospect of being soon reunited to your lady and family in England, I do not scruple to confess that I shall be among those, who will view your departure from this Country with regret; at the same time I beg leave to add that I shall reflect with pleasure on the friendship with which you have honored me. The testimonies you have left of this, could my mind be so ungrateful as to forget it, would be constant remembrancers. For your kind offer of Services in England I shall feel myself ever obliged and should occasion require it I shall avail myself of your kindness.

I am sorry it was not in my power to take you by the hand the day I left Philadelphia. I called once and as you were not within I did not leave my name intending to have called again but circumstance preventing it I requested Mr. Gouv. Morris to offer you my apology and best wishes. should your Son who is lately arrived from England, be prompted by business or inclination to travel into this State it would give me much pleasure to shew him every civility in my power; the same to any branch of your family, or any of your friends.

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In wishing you (whenever it shall be undertaken) a pleasant and prosperous voyage, and a happy meeting with Mrs. Vaughan and the other parts of your family and friends in England, I am with great cordiality and sincerity, joined by Mrs. Washington the Major and Fanny, and with sentiments of the most perfect esteem and regard, &c.52

To WILSON MILES CARY AND GEORGE NICHOLAS

Mount Vernon, November 5, 1787.

Gentn: A few days ago, the letter herewith sent from Mr. Athawes, accompanying the Will of our much esteemed and greatly to be lamented friend, the Honble. George Win. Fairfax Esqr. came to my hands, on which melancholy occasion I sincerely condole with you.

The small package containing the watch (which is mentioned in the Will) and the two letters spoken of in Mr. Athawes letter (one for Thomas Fairfax Esqr. and the other for Colo. Warner Washington) I have (presuming it would be your wish) forwarded to their respective

52. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

addresses by safe conveyances.

However desirous I may be of giving unequivocal proofs of my respect for the deceased, and of my regard for, and attachment to the amiable lady he has left behind; yet, such is the peculiar situation of my own concerns so much are they deranged, and so much more attention is due to them occasioned by nine years absence and bad management than in my power to give them that it would be folly in the extreme in me, to undertake a fresh trust which I am Confident is not in my power to discharge agreeable either to the intention of the testator, or to the dictator of my own Judgment. In a word, from a variety of causes with the enumeration of which I shall not trouble you, I have not leizure to recover my own affairs (and some others which are involved with them) from that disordered state

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into which they have fallen. But if there are any friendly Offices in this part of the Country and within my reach in the discharge of which I can be useful, I shall have great pleasure in rendering them.

Having said thus much, it is unnecessary for me to add that the legacy bequeathed me by the Will becomes a nullity.

Permit me to remind Mr.

Nicholas that there is an escuitore with many Papers belonging to the deceased in my possession many of them of great Value. They might be packed in a Trunk and sent by the Stage to Richmond but a careful and responsible person ought to take charge of them. With the greatest esteem, etc.⁵³

To CATHERINE MACAULAY GRAHAM

Mount Vernon, November 16, 1787.

Madam: Your favor of the 10th. of October, 1786 came duly to hand and should have had a much earlier acknowledgment had not the business of the public (in which I have been, in a manner, compelled to engage again) engrossed the whole of my time for several months past, and my own private affairs required my unremitting attention since my return home. I do not know to what cause I shall impute your not receiving my letter of the 10th. of Jany. 1786 till the last of June, it went by the common rout, and was subject to the common incidents.

Mr. Pine's Historical painting does not appear to go on very rapidly, he informed me, when I was in Philadelphia, that he had been

53. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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collecting materials to enable him to proceed with it, but that it must be a work of time to accomplish it.

You will undoubtedly, before you receive this, have an opportunity of seeing the Plan of Government proposed by the Convention for the United States. You will very readily conceive, Madam, the difficulties which the Convention had to struggle against. The various and opposite interests which were to be conciliated; the local prejudices which were to be subdued, the diversity of opinions and sentiments which were to be reconciled; and in fine, the sacrifices which were necessary to be made on all sides for the General welfare, combined to make it a work of so intricate and difficult a nature, that I think it is much to be wondered at, that any thing could have been produced with such unanimity as the Constitution proposed. It is now submitted to the consideration of the People, and waits their decision. The legislatures of the States which have been convened since the Constitution was offered have readily agreed to the calling a convention in their respective States; some by a unanimous vote and others by a large majority, but whether it will be adopted by the People or not, remains yet to be determined. Mrs. Washington and the rest of the family join me in Compts. I have the Honor etc.⁵⁴

54. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To HENRY BANKS

Mount Vernon, November 22, 1787.

Sir: For the letter you did me the favor to write to me on the 21st. Ulto. I offer you my thanks. No application has ever been made to *me* or to any person on *my* account that has ever come to my knowledge, for the taxes of my land in Greenbrier, and totally ignorant am I of the amount of them. If you can inform me, I would thank you.

I have no objection to the settlement of my Lands on the Great Kanhawa, or on the Ohio above it, provided it would be done to the reciprocal benefit Landlord and tenant. Every

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advantage of situation and Soil is possessed by these lands in a superlative degree, full conviction of this fact, a firm belief that I can obtain no rent *now* which will be adequate a few years hence to the value of the land, by which to be induced to lease it. and having thoughts of selling some, if not the whole, If I can get what I conceive to be the worth, have been the means of its lying in a dormant State till this time,⁵⁵ but if it is likely to be pressed with taxes, something must be done with it and soon, it not being convenient for me to pay these without some return; preparative therefore to this I should have no objection in the first instance to let as many families as may incline, live on it three years Rent free, on condition of their making certain Improvements which may be stipulated; but what agreement (under the circumstances I have mentioned) to make with them afterwards is a difficulty which

55. That is, the reason of its lying in a dormant state.

weights powerfully in my mind. If leases are given for money Rents, they must either commence high or rise proportionately to the increasing value of the land, otherwise I shall not receive a compensation. To let the land for # of the produce may do well for the Landlord whose eye is always on the tenant; but would not I conceive, be very productive to him who lives 3 or 400 Miles distant from them unless he should happen to hit upon a faithful and attentive agent. Something however as I observed before must be done, and 3 years Rent free, any families may be upon a certainty of holding it and a preference given to them at the end thereof *on the terms* which may be offered by others. I have none of my printed advertisements left, or I would trouble you with one of them. They offered the Land to the best of my recollection, in three ways, first for 21 years at five pd. p. Hundred Acres; 2d. for ever at an annual Rent of £10; and 3d. for 999 years the rent to commence at £5. and encrease in a certain Ratio every two years. In each case an exemption from Rent was allowed for the 3 first years and in all of them certain buildings and other improvements were required.

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Your having mentioned that you hold land at the mouth of Coal River, I would beg leave to observe that I have one tract of 2000 Acres in the point of fork between that River and the Kanhawa running up the

1st. about 2 Miles (from the point) and up the latter more than 4, and on the opposite 2 Miles above the fork another of my tracts for 3000 Acres begins, and runs upwards 6 Miles bordering on the River for quantity; as these tracts are in the vicinity of yours it is possible you may have been on them in which case I would thank you for your opinion of them. From the mouth of Pokitellico on the East side the River for 13 Miles down the Kanhawa I hold the land; and on the other side, from within 2 or 3 Miles of the mouth I have a tract which runs near 20 Miles along the River equal to any and I have ever seen all of which may be Seated as hath been mentioned, together with that on the Ohio above. I am, etc.⁵⁶

To THOMAS JOHNSON

Mount Vernon, November 22, 1787.

Sir: The letter with which you have been pleased to honor me, dated the 16th. inst came to my hand the day before yesterday. By to morrow's Post this answer will be forwarded to you.

Mr. Rumsey has given you an uncandid account of his explanation to me, of the principle on which his Boat was to be propelled against [the] stream. At the time he exhibited his model, and obtained

56. This is another one of the letters which is copied in an exceptionally careless and ignorant manner in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

[my] certificate I had no reason to believe that the use of steam was contemplated by him, sure I am it was not mentioned; and equally certain I am, that it would not apply

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to the project he then had in view; the first communication of which was to me made in September 1784 (at the springs in Berkley); the Novr. following, being in Richmond, I met Mr. Rumsey there who was at that time applying to the Assembly for an exclusive Act. He then spoke of the effect of Steam and the conviction he was under of the usefulness of its application for the purpose of inland Navigation; but I did not conceive, nor have I done so at any moment since, that it was suggested as part of his original plan, but rather as the ebullition of his genius. It is proper however for me to add, that some time *after this* Mr. Fitch⁵⁷ called upon me on his way to Richmond and explaining his scheme, wanted a letter from me, introductory of it to the Assembly of this State the giving of which I declined; and went so [far] as to inform him that tho' I was bound not to disclose the principles of Mr. Rumsey's discovery I would venture to assure him, that the thought of applying steam for the purpose he mentioned was not original but had been mentioned to me by Mr. Rumsey; this I thought myself obliged to say that, whichever (if either) of them, was the discoverer might derive the benefit of the

57. John Fitch.

invention.

To the best of my recollection of what has passed between Mr. Rumsey and me, the foregoing is an impartial recital.

Permit me to ask you, my good Sir, if a letter which I wrote to you during the sitting of your last Assembly, enclosing one from Mr. Wm. Wilson to me, concerning the confiscated property of (I think) Messrs. Dunlap & Co. of Glasgow ever reached your hands? and if it did, whether anything was, or can be done in that business? As an Executor of the Will of Colo. Thomas Colvill it behoves me to know precisely what is to be expected from that quarter as a large sum is due from that Company to his Estate. I am the more anxious to do it immediately, as Mr. Wilson who is concerned in the House of Dunlap & Co. is about to leave the Country. With great esteem etc.⁵⁸

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To SAMUEL HANSON

Mount Vernon, November 24, 1787.

Sir: I am sorry it is not convenient for you to board my Nephews any longer, Mr. Lear is desired to see what can be done with them. For the advice you have given them I feel myself obliged and wish they had sense and prudence enough to be governed by it. I am, etc.⁵⁹

58. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The words in brackets have been supplied, they are not in the "Letter Book" copy.

59. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To DIEGO DE GARDOQUI

Mount Vernon, November 28, 1787.

Dear Sir: I have received your letters of the 29th. of October⁶¹ and 9th. of Novr. The latter was handed to me by Colo. H. Lee, together with 4 Vols. of Don Quixote which you did me the honor to send to me. I consider them as a mark of your esteem which is highly pleasing to me, and which merits my warmest acknowledgment, I must therefore beg, my dear Sir, that you will accept of my best thanks for them.

Your wish to establish a permanent and sincere amity between these States and the Court of Spain is highly meritorious; and if, as you observe, no two nations apply more exactly to each other, a connexion between them upon the basis of reciprocal interest must be a very desirable event.

Altho no man could feel more pleasure and satisfaction than myself in seeing this Country form such connexions as would render it happy and flourishing, yet my being totally detached from all matters of government, entirely prevents my interfering, with any degree

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of propriety, in an affair of this nature, I am far removed from, and have as little to do in the publick transactions of this State as any citizen in it; and in matters which come under the cognizance of the United States I have been careful not to have any concern,

61. Gardoqui's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

unless when called upon for information respecting any subject which was connected with my publick employment during the war.

I shall be exceedingly sorry to see you obliged to abandon an object which has in view the interest and advantage of both our countries, and I cannot yet despair of their being connected in such a manner as to ensure a mutual benefit. With Sentiments of the Most perfect consideration and respect, etc.⁶²

To SAMUEL POWEL

Mount Vernon, November 30, 1787.

Dear Sir: With much pleasure we received the acct. of the safe arrival of Mrs. Powell and yourself in Philadelphia; and that your journey was attended with fewer accidents and less delay than might have been expected.

The Mr. Morris's gave us the pleasure of their companies two days and Nights as they journeyed to Richmond, and did not leave us without

62. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

hopes of their taking this rout as they return.

By this evenings Post (for the Newspapers brot. by it, I am now sending to Alexandria) we expect to receive the decision of your State on the Fœderal Government. In this, matters remain I believe in Statu quo.

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I would with great pleasure have sent you more of the Spanish Chestnuts, but the few which I saved for my own use were planted before your letter came to hand, next year, if the trees bear I will save as many as you or your friends may have occasion for and lest I should forget it I beg you to remind me, about the first of October.

Mrs. Washington and the Family join me in affecte. regards to Mrs. Powell and yourself, and both of us beg you to accept our grateful thanks for the kind offers you have respectively made us. With great esteem etc.63

63. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To DAVID STUART**

Mount Vernon, November 30, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 14th. came duly to hand. I am sorry to find by it that the opposition is gaining strength. At this however I do not wonder. The adversaries to a measure are generally, if not always, more active and violent than the advocates; and frequently employ means which the others do not, to accomplish their ends.

I have seen no publication yet, that ought, in my judgment, to shake the proposed Government in the mind of an impartial public. In a word, I have hardly seen any that is not addressed to the passions of the people; and obviously calculated to rouse their fears. Every attempt to amend the Constitution at this time, is, in my opinion, idly vain. If there are characters who prefer disunion, or seperate Confederacies to the general Government which is offered to them, their opposition may, for ought I know, proceed from principle; but as nothing in my conception is more to be deprecated than a disunion, or these seperate Confederacies, my voice, as far as it will extend, shall be offered in favor of the latter. That there are some writers (and others perhaps who may not have written) who wish to see

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these States divided into several confederacies is pretty evident. As an antidote to these opinions, and in order to investigate the ground of objections to the Constitution which

is submitted to the People, the Fœderalist, under the signature of Publius, is written. The numbers which have been published I send you. If there is a Printer in Richmond who is really well disposed to support the New Constitution he would do well to give them a place in his Paper. They are (I think I may venture to say) written by able men; and before they are finished, will, if I am mistaken not, place matters in a true point of light. Altho' I am acquainted with some of the writers who are concerned in this work, I am not at liberty to disclose their names, nor would I have it known that they are sent by *me* to *you* for promulgation.

You will recollect that the business of the Potomack Company is withheld from the Assembly of Maryland until it is acted upon in this State. That the sitting of that Assembly is expected to be short. And that our operations may be suspended if no other recourse is to be had than to common law processes to obtain the dividends, which are called for by the Directors, and not paid by the Subscribers.

Certificate, and Commutation taxes I hope will be done away by this Assembly. And that it will not interfere either with public treaties, or private contracts. Bad indeed must the situation of that Country be, when this is the case. With great pleasure I received the information respecting the commencement of my Nephews political course.

I hope he will not be so buoyed up by the favourable impression it has made as to become a babbler. If the Convention was such a tumultuous, and disorderly body as a certain Gentleman has represented it to be, it may be ascribed, in a great degree to some dissatisfied characters who would not submit to the decisions of a majority thereof. I shall depend upon the Corn from Mr. Henley. All here are well and join me in good wishes for you. I am etc.64

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To EMBREE & SHOTWELL

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1787.

Gentn: Colo. Henry Lee (who called upon me as he returned home from New York) informed me that you dealt largely in grass seeds (saved in this Country), that you sold none but what was good, and those on the most moderate terms.

Under this information I beg leave to ask the price of the following, and whether an opportunity could be depended upon for sending them by water to Alexandria before the month of March next. Red Clover Seed. Timothy Do. Orchard grass Do.

64. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N. J.

He told me that he had bought some of the first from you and he thinks at 4 dollars pr. Bushl. but not having the Bill at hand could not be positive. Imported Seeds or the Seeds of this Country if not of the last years growth I would not purchase. the first, unless brot. in the Cabbin is always injured and the latter is not to be depended upon.

Your answer to this letter by the Post will oblige Gentn. Yr. etc.65

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your letters of the 23d. of Septr. and 1sth. of Novr. came duly to hand. You may inform Mr. Haines that my Barley, this year, shared the same fate with my other crops. The drought during the summer was so excessive that I cannot form any just opinion of what it might produce in a seasonable year; it yielded about 14 bushls. to the Acre which was a proportionate crop to any other kind of Grain which I sowed; and if I judge of its success

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from this circumstance it must be favourable. This information I would have given you sooner had

65. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

I been able to have ascertained the quantity of Barley that was made.

I have requested Thomas Smith Esqr. of Carlyle, who, I expect, has, or will recover some money which is due to me in the Western Country, to put it into your hands, unless he has an opportunity of forwarding it directly to Alexandria; if you should receive it I will thank you to deposit it in the bank for me, and send me the notes that I may negotiate them here as I have occasion for the Money. I enclose to you a letter to Mr. Smith which I will thank you to forward in as safe and expeditious a manner as you can. As I imagine you have, by this time, recd. the interest due upon my warrant in your hands, or if you have not, Mr. Smith will, upon receiving the enclosed letter, forward some money to you, I must request you to pay Mr. Charles Pettit's bill for 4 Backs and 8 Jambs⁶⁶ sent to me, which amounts to £18.5.1.

I will thank you to inform me the lowest prices for which good fresh Clover, Timothy and Orchard Grass seed can be purchased with you. I am etc.

P.S. The Leopard skin sent by Captn. Steward arrived safe.⁶⁷

[H.S.P.]

66. For the fireplaces.

67. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

To THOMAS SMITH

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1787.

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Sir: I have received your letter of the 26th. Octr. and am much surprised to find that my letters to the Western Country so often miscarry. I inclose a duplicate of a letter which I wrote to you from Philadelphia, and committed to the care of a Capt. Bradley who informed me that he lived at the Court House in Washington County, should pass thro Carlisle, and promised to deliver it himself.

I have written to Mr. Smith⁶⁸ of Baltimore requesting him to forward to me the money which you informed me you had lodged in his hands for me.

The money which you recover on my account may be put into the hands of Clement Biddle Esqr. of Philadelphia, who will be so good as to give me information thereof. but if a safe opportunity should offer to Alexandria I would prefer having it lodged there in the Hands of Mr. Win. Hunter Junr.

Permit me Sir to repeat my thanks to you for your attention to my business, and one more to request that you and Mr. Ross will mention the sum with which you will be satisfied for conducting my Ejectments and receive it out of the money which you may recover on my acct. I am, etc.⁶⁹

68. Nathaniel Smith.

69. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN LANGDON

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1787.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 6th. Ult. and am much obliged to you for the information contained in it. I am happy to find that dispositions in your part of the Continent are so favourable to the proposed plan of Government: if the true interest of the United

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States was consulted I think there could be but little opposition to it in any part of the country.

The Publick papers have undoubtedly announced to you, before this, the proceedings of the legislature of this State upon the business; they have

appointed the convention to meet on the first monday in June; whether putting it off to so late a period will be favourable or otherwise, must be determined by circumstances, for if those States whose conventions are to meet sooner, should adopt the plan I think there is no doubt but they will be followed by this, and if some of them should reject it, it is very probable that the opposers of it here will exert themselves to add this State to the number. I am, etc.⁷⁰

70. From the "Letter Book" copy in tile *Washington Papers*.

To GEORGE WEEDON

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1787.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 25th. Ulto. enclosing the proceedings of the Cincinnati of this State, which I am much obliged to you for forwarding to me.

I will, agreeable to your request, send some cuttings of the Golden willow to Alexandria to be forwarded to you, but I imagine this is an improper season to put them out, for as they are to be propagated from the slip the spring seems to be the most suitable time for setting them; should these fail

I will send you more in the spring if you will remind me of it. I am, etc.⁷⁰

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1787.

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Dear Sir: A Mr. H. Banks, of your Assembly is disposed to be kind to me or has some view of being so to himself. Charity leads to the first, suspicion to the latter opinion. He has informed me that the Sheriff of Greenbrier has a considerable demand upon me for the taxes of my land on the Great Kanhawa, in that Country; but has forborne (through *his* means) from proceeding to extremities till *he* could advise me thereof. This is the first intimation directly or indirectly I have had of these taxes. He thinks I might settle these lands immediately, if an exemption from Rent was allowed for a term; moderate Rents agreed for hereafter, and these to be in specific Articles proportionate to the Crop. After naming one Hines, or Stines as his Agent in that Country, and a Capt. William L. Lovely, whose continuance there he says is doubtful he offers any services in his power to facilitate any plan I may adopt for seating. He also wants to buy some of the Land but is not able. Under this Statement let me

70. From the "Letter Book" copy in tile *Washington Papers*.

ask, *confidentially*, the Character and circumstances of this Banks; and I would thank you for obtaining the most satisfactory answers, from the Representatives of Greenbrier, Montgomery, Bottetourt or other Counties in that quarter to the following questions.

1st. The distance from Stanton to Green Court House?

2d. From thence to the Mouth of Coal River, a branch of the Great Kanhawa?

3d. Whether there is a direct Road from G. K. Court Ho. to the last mentioned place, or whether this road crosses or comes to the Kanhawa above, or below the Mouth of Coal River?

4th. What sort of a road it is, to wit, Mountainous, or tolerably level, and what kind of a Country does it pass thro', and how Settled?

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5th. Whether there is any road leading, from the mouth of Coal River, or that part of the Kanhawa to which the Greenbrier road strikes into the mouth.

6th. The distance and what kind of a road, if any?

7th. Whether Colo. Lewis (the Son of Genl. Andw. Lewis) lives at the mouth of the Kanhawa?

8th. And what Settlement there is at that place whether by the Roads above enumerated in his rout, or is the most

direct road from Staunton to the mouth of the Great Kanhawa, and whether the distances from place to place a description thereof:

9th. What are the *rich* bottom lands on the Kanhawa supposed to be worth? and for what would they Sell, credit being given.

10th. For what would they Rent?

11th. The most advantageous and practicable mode of doing this?

12th. Is there any person of character living on the Kanhawa from the mouth of local River to the confluence of it with the Ohio, in whom confidence could be placed to Rent my lands there? and transact business for me?

13th. How are the Counties of Greenbrier, Botetourt and Montgomery divided? or in what County is the lands *on* the East of the Kanhawa from the mouth of Coal to the Ohio. and in what County or Counties are the lands on the Ohio between the mouths of the two Kanhawas?

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14th. Supposing a person was to undertake a Journey from Alexandria to the Great Kanhawa which would be his best rout and what the distance from place to place exclusive of the way by Fort Pitt?

Necessity will compel me to do something, and soon, with these lands. It will not do to pay taxes and receive nothing in return for them.

Knowing that the quality and Situation of them is exceeded by none in the western Counties, I may have held them in [too?] high estimation to obtain Tenants on the terms which have been advertised by me and it is difficult to fix rents on land encreasing every day in value that will be an equivolent some years hence. unless on the terms suggested by Mr. Banks that is to receive # of the Crops to this however elegable it may be to a landlord on the spot, many reasons may be opposed by one at a distance viz. Idleness and want of honesty in the tenant. Want of Care, attention and integrity in the agent. and want of a market if the other two could be obviated. Yet something must be done, and by getting them seated, and in some degree improved it would enable me to rent them more advantageously hereafter.

I wish you would let me know (if you can come at the means of doing it) what taxes these lands of mine are subject to. Tho' I requested, in answer to Mr. Banks's letter to me, (to which I have received a reply) to be informed of this, he has passed it over in silence.

Write to me on all the points here submitted, as soon as you can obtain information, as I shall postpone a second letter to Mr. Banks till I hear from you.

My land on the Ohio lyes between the Mouths of the two Kanhawas, and on the great Kanhawa in 4 tracts from within two Miles of the mouth to and above the Mouth of Coal River. I am, etc.71

To JAMES MADISON

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Mount Vernon, December 7, 1787.

My dear Sir: Since my last to you, I have been favored with your letters of the 28th. of October and 18th. of November. With the last came 7 numbers of the Fœderalist, under the signature of Publius, for which I thank you. They are forwarded to a Gentleman in Richmond for republication; the doing of which in this State will I am persuaded, have a good effect as there are certainly characters in it who are no friends to a general government; perhaps I should not go too far was I to add, who have no great objection to the introduction of anarchy and confusion.

The Sollicitude to discover what the several State Legislatures would do with the Constitution is now transferred to the several Conventions. the decisions of which being more interesting and conclusive is, consequently, more anxiously expected than the other. What Pennsylvania and

71. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Delaware have done, or will do must soon be known.⁷² Other Conventions to the Northward and Eastward of them are treading closely on their heels; but what the three Southern States have done, or in what light the new Constitution is viewed by them, I have not been able to learn. North Carolina it has been said (by some accts. from Richmond) will be governed in a great measure by the conduct of Virginia. The pride of South Carolina will not I conceive suffer this influence to work in her councils; and the disturbances in Georgia will or I am mistaken show the people of it the propriety of being United, and the necessity there is for a general Government. If these with the States Eastward and Northward of us, should accede to the Fœderal Government, I think the citizens of this State will have no cause to bless the opposers of it here if they should carry their point. A paragraph in the Baltimore Paper has announced a change in the Sentiments of Mr. Jay on this subject; and adds that, from being an admirer of the new form, he has become a bitter enemy to it. This relation (without knowing Mr. Jay's opinion) I disbelieve, from a

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Conviction that he would consider the matter well before he would pass any Judgment. It is very unlikely therefore that a man of his knowledge and foresight should turn on both sides of a question in so short a space. I am anxious however to know

72. Delaware ratified the Constitution Dec. 7, 1787, and Pennsylvania, the second State to ratify, on December 12.

the foundation (if any) for this.

It would have given me great pleasure to have complied with your request in behalf of your foreign acquaintance. At present I am unable to do it. The survey of the Country between the Eastern and Western Waters is not yet reported by the Commissioners tho' promised to me very shortly, (the Survey being compleated) by one of them. no draught that can convey a proper idea of the work on this River has yet been taken. much of the labor except at the great fall has been bestowed in the bed of the River in a removal of the rocks and deepening the Water. At the Great falls the labour has indeed been great; the water there is taken into a canal about 200 yards above the Cataract and conveyed by a level cut (thro' a solid rock in some places and very Stoney ground in others) more than a mile to the lock seats; [five] in number, by means of which the Craft when these locks are compleated will be let into the River below the fall (which in all is 76 feet). At the Seneca falls six miles above the great fall a channel which has been formed by the river in freshes is under improvement for the navigation; the same at Shannondoah in part. At the lower fall (where nothing has yet been done) a level cut and locks are proposed. These constitute the principal part of the work to compleat the navigation; the parts of the river between requiring loose stones only to be removed in order to deepen the water where it is too shallow in dry seasons.

P.S. Since writing the foregoing, I have received a letter from a member (of the Assembly) in Richmond dated the 4th. Inst. giving the following information.

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I am sorry to inform you, that the Constitution has lost ground so considerably that it is doubted whether it has any longer a majority in its favor. From a vote which took place the other day, this would appear certain, tho' I cannot think it so decisive as the enemies to it consider it. It marks however the inconsistency of some of its opponents. At the time the resolutions calling a Convention were entered into Colo M— sided with the friends to the Constitution, and opposed any hint being given, expressive of the Sentiments of the House as to amendments. But as it was unfortunately omitted at that time to make provision for the subsistence of the Convention, it became necessary to pass some resolution providing for any expence whh. may attend an attempt to make amendments. As M— had on the former occasion declared, that it would be improper to make any discovery of the Sentiments of the House on the subject, and that we had no right to suggest any thing to a body paramt. to us, his advocating such a resolution was matter of astonishment.

It is true, he declared it was not declaratory of our opinion; but the contrary must be very obvious. As I have heard many declare themselves friends to the Constitution since the vote, I do not consider it as altogether decisive of the opinion of the House with respect to it.

I am informed, both by Genl. Wilkinson (who is just arrived here from New Orleans by way of No. Carolina) and Mr. Ross, that North Carolina is almost unanimous for adopting it. The latter received a letter from a member of that Assembly now sitting.

In a debating Society here, which meets once a week, this subject has been canvassed at two successive meetings, and is to be finally decided on tomorrow evening; as the whole Assembly, almost has attended on these occasions, their opinion will then be pretty well ascertained; and as the opinion on this occasion will have much influence, some of Colo. Innis's friends have obtained a promise from him to enter the list.

The bill respecting British debts has passed our house but with such a clause as I think makes it worse than a rejection.

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The letter, of which I enclose you a printed copy, from Colo. R H Lee to the Govt. has been circulated with great industry in manuscript, four weeks before it went to press, and said to have had a bad influence. The enemies to the Constitution leave no stone unturned to encrease the opposition to it. I am, &c.73

73. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS JOHNSON AND THOMAS SIM LEE

Mount Vernon, December 9, 1787.

Sir: Presuming that Colo. Fitzgerald according to his promise has communicated to you the vote of the Potomack Co. passed at the last general Meeting, held at George Town, and the measures consequent of it, taken by the directors, I shall trouble you with no more than the result which you will find in the enclosed authenticated Act of the Assembly of this State.

It is scarcely necessary to observe to you, Gentlemen, that unless a similar one is obtained from your Assembly, during its present Session that the work of navigation will soon be at a stand. You know what steps have been taken, and how ineffectually, to collect the dividends from the tardy members. The others think it hard to be further called on and some indeed have announced they will advance no more until the arrearages are paid up. To recover these will be a work of immense time under the existing law.

You know best under what form to bring this matter before your Assembly. If by way of Petition you will

please to have one drawn, and if it is necessary the name of the President should be affixed thereto, I hereby authorize you to give it my signature with great esteem I am, etc.74

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To CHARLES CARTER

Mount Vernon, December 14, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 21st. of Octr. would not have remained so long unacknowledged could I with any degree of precision have answered your quæries sooner. I wish it was in my power to do it satisfactorily now. The drought of last Summer in *this* neighbourhood was so unconscionably severe, that the experiments I contemplated were by no means conclusive, the result such as it is, I will give you.⁷⁶

In level ground, as equal in quality as I could obtain it, I laid of 10 squares, each square containing by exact measurement, half an acre. half of each of these I manured at the rate of 200 bushel of well rotted farm yard dung to the Acre to ascertain the difference between slight manuring such as we might have it in our power to give the land, and no Manure.

74. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

76. See Washington's "Diary" for Oct. 25, 1787.

The whole of this ground received the first plowing in the winter; and each square previous to sowing, or planting was worked exactly alike afterwards. Two of these were sown with Oats (of different sorts) on the 77 of . Two with Barley (of different sorts) on the of . One with Buck wheat on the day of ; another with Jerusalem Artichokes on the day of ; another with Irish Potatoes on the day of ; another with sweet (or Country) Ditto on the day of ; another that is to say # with the *common* sort of homony bean; # with the bunch homony bean and the other one third with very small, and round black eyed Pease called the Gentlemans Pea. The two squares was sown half in Carrots, and half in Turnips both in Broad Cast.

Yield as Follow. Acres of Land. Dung Undung Total The 2 squares of oates makg. together 1 14½ 11 25½ 2 of Barley not worth dividg. for the same reason 1 2 1# 3# 1 Do Jerm. Artichoke ½ 29½ 29 58½ 1 Do Buck Wheat ½ 2¼ 1# 4 1 Do Irish Potatoes ½ 19¼ 9¼

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29¾ 1 Do Sweet Do ½ 6½ la 5 la 5½ Seed 5½ rd. 22½ 1 Do ½ Carrots ½ 12 12 24 ½
Turnips ¼ 1 Square a # in Corn. homony beans # # in Bunch Do Do # # in sml. 2d. bla.
eyed Pease #

77. This and the following blanks are left so in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

I have already observed, that the drought was too intense to authorize any just conclusion from these experiments; for besides occasioning many of the seeds and plants to come up badly, the growth of all was so much retarded as to leave little hope at one time that anything would be produced from some of them.

The Barley was exceedingly *thin*; in some parts of the ground hardly any. of the Buck Wheat ¼ of the square (undunged parts) had not a plant. Of the Jerusalem Artichoke out of 442 hills 417 were Missing; both kinds of Potatoes were a good deal missing; and the Irish sort had not roots as big as a Pea the first of Sepr. when in a commonly seasonably year they would at that time have been fit for use. The Carrots and Turnips were thin, as were the Pease and Beans.

Adjoining to these squares I laid of exactly 10 Acres in an oblong form and drilled them with Corn in rows 10 feet a part, and 18 Inches asunder in the rows, between these rows Irish Potatoes, Carrots, Turnips, and the common blackeyed Pease were alternately planted and sown (that no advantage of soil or situation should be more in favor of one than the other). By this mode you will perceive that *half* the Rows were in Corn, an # in Potatoes, an # in Turnips (for I ought rather to have said were intended for them but they could not be got to grow).

The Corn yielded only 4 43 Bushels of sound

Potatoes 47¾

Carrots 22

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Pease these by mistake got mixed with others and the quantity could not be ascertained but did not yield much.

The Potatoes were missing. The Carrots much more so. from this experiment which is not more conclusive than the other, it appears that the Potatoe rows, though but a fourth of the Corn Rows, yielded nearly as many bushels; and that the Carrots also but a fourth of the Corn rows amounted to nearly half. Had the Potatoes stood as well as the Corn, the numbers of bushels would have been more than that of Corn, and had the Carrots stood as well as the Potatoes, the quantity of bushels it is supposed would not have fallen short of the Potatoes. From the quantity of Corn (but a barrell to the Acre which in a moderately seasonable year would have yielded 2 or 2 and an half to the Acre) you may form some conception of the severity of the drought, as the ground was well tilled and especially when I add that all my grass seeds were destroyed by it. The Potatoes, ultimately, grew to a good size, and the Carrots were *remarkably* large, few smaller than the wrist, and numbers larger than the small of the leg. Inconclusive as these trials have been I am nevertheless clearly of opinion that Corn in Drills 3 feet apart and the plants 18

Inches asunder in the rows, with Carrots or Potatoes or both (for the Seasons to put them in the ground and taking them up differing, the farmer is less hurried) in his operations will be found a most profitable husbandry. I have no doubt that an Acre of Corn planted in this manner will yield as much as an Acre of the same quality in the usual mode of planting. If this be true (and I have very little doubt of it) the Potatoes and Carrots are nearly clear profit as very little more labour is required in this mode of cultivating of them than the Corn would need, and receive if nothing was between it. The only consideration then is, whether the production is too much for the Land? The books say *generally*, that neither Carrots nor Potatoes are exhausters. But as the cultivation of them, with me, is new, I shall decide nothing on this point but shall practice the mode untill I meet with discouragements.

I do not know that the Agricultural Society of Philadelphia have adopted any regular mode of communicating the information they receive to the Public, good would certainly result

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from such communications and I presume after it has got a little better established this will be the case. That I have not received any answer to my letter respecting the Wolf dogs is matter of surprize to me, when I do, the result shall be communicated to you.

I thank you for your Congratulations on my return from the Convention and with what you add respecting the Constitution.

My decided opinion of the matter is that there is no alternative between the adoption of it and anarchy. If one State however important it may conceive itself to be should suppose, or a minority of the States, that they can dictate a Constitution to the Majority unless they have the power of administering to good effect, administering the Ultema ratio they will find themselves deceived. All the opposition to it, that I have yet seen, is I must confess addressed more to the passions than to the reason, and clear I am if another Fœderal Convention is attempted the sentiments of the members will be more discordant or less Conciliatory than the last, in fine, that they will agree upon no genl. plan. General Government is now suspended by a thread I might go farther and say it is really at an end, and what will be the consequence of a fruitless attempt to amend the one which is offered, before it is tried, or of the delay from the attempt, does not in my Judgment need the gift of prophecy to predict. I am not a blind admirer (for I saw the imperfections) of the Constitution to which I have assisted to give birth, but I am fully persuaded it is the best that can be obtained at *this* day and that it or disunion is before us; if the first is our choice when the defects of it are experienced Constitutional door is open for

amendments and may be adopted in a peaceable manner without tumult or disorder. I am, etc.⁷⁸

To THOMAS LEWIS

Mount Vernon, December 25, 1787.

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Sir: It is my desire, and I am told that it is the wish of many and sure I am policy requires it, that the uncultivated tracts of land on the Great Kanhawa and Ohio belonging to the Military should be settled. The difficulty with me respecting mine has been, how to draw the line of mutual advantage for Landlord and Tenant, with respect to the terms; and where to find a confidential person on or near the spot who would act for me as Agent.

Two reasons, hitherto, have restrained me from making application to you, on this head, first, the uncertainty I was under of your having become an actual resident in those parts, and second a doubt whether it might be agreeable to you to accept this trust on account of the trouble, and little profit that would derive from the agency, at least for some time.

The first cause being removed, (having understood by means of some members in Assembly that you live at Point Pleasant) I shall take the liberty

78. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

of trying you on the second; under a hope, that more from the desire of seeing the country settled the neighborhood strengthened and property thereby secured; and the value of it increased; than from any pecuniary considerations at the present moment, you may be induced to aid me in seating my lands on the great Kanhawa and on the Ohio between the mouths of the two Rivers bearing that name.

If you accept the trust this letter shall be your authority, fully, and amply given and binding upon me and my heirs for the following purposes.

First. To place as many Tenants on the several tracts of Lands (Plats of which with my signature annexed to them shall accompany this Power) as you can obtain consistently with your Judgment, and suggestions hereafter mentioned.

Second. That an exemption from the payment of Rents for the term of three years shall be allowed them provided certain reasonable improvements such as you shall stipulate for,

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and which I think (but leave the matter to you) ought to be comfortable houses, Acres of Arable and Acres of Meadow Land, and a certain number of frute Trees planted.

Third. That for the fourth year, rents shall become due, and shall consist (as I am told the custom of the Country is) of a third of whatever is raised on the premises, which rents shall be annually paid thereafter to you, or my agent for the time being in that Country.

Fourth. That under this tenure they may be assured of the places (if they incline to remain, and will go on to improve them) for the term of — years; were these not to exceed ten, it would be more pleasing to me than any extension beyond that number; but if this limitation will not be acceded to on the part of the Tenant, I must leave it to your discretion to augment them, making the term definite, and not for lives, which is not only uncertain, but often introductory of disputes to ascertain the termination of them. Instances of which have happened to me. All mines and minerals will be reserved for the landlord, and where there are valuable streams for water works, the Rents must bear some proportion to the advantages which are likely to result from them.

Fifth. Whether custom authorizes, or justice requires that the tenant should pay the land tax of what he agrees to hold before the rent becomes due; or afterwards, in whole, or part, must be governed by the practice which

prevails and consequently is left to your decision.

Sixth. I do not conceive it necessary, nor should I incline to go into much, or indeed any expence in laying the Land off into Lots till it begins to be thick settled and productive. The first comers will of course have the first choice; but they and all others are to be informed that their lotts (be the quantity little or much) will be bounded by water courses, or (where this is not the case) by convenient and regular forms. And as most of my Tracts (as you will see by the plats) have extensive boundaries on the rivers running but a little ways back it is my wish indeed, it naturally follows, that back part of the land should be considered as

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the support of that which will be first settled and cleared on the margins of the Rivers and a sufficiency of it reserved for that purpose.

Seventh. For your trouble in negotiating this business, I am very willing to allow the usual Commission for collecting, converting into Cash and transmitting to me, the rents after they shall

commence and whatever you may think proper to charge me (in reason) for your trouble till this shall happen, I will cheerfully agree to pay.

Whether you accept this trust or not, you will do me a favor in the communication of your sentiments on the subject; there are two ways by which letters will come safe. Viz thrown into the Post Office at Philadelphia or into that at Richmond. Colo. Bayard an acquaintance of mine, or any acquaintance you may have at Fort Pitt, will forward them to the first place, and the means of doing it to the latter you must be a better Judge of than myself. If the letters once get into the Post Office I shall be sure of them. On private conveyances there is no reliance; they are tossed about and neglected so as rarely to reach their intended destination when sent in this manner.

If you should incline to act under this power your own good sense and Judgment will at once dictate the propriety, indeed necessity of promulgating it as extensively as you can by Advertisements to those parts from whence settlers are most likely to be drawn over and above the opportunities which your situation gives you of communicating the matter to travellers by water on the Ohio.

On the other hand if you do not incline to act I would thank you for returning me

the papers herewith enclosed as it will save me the trouble of making other copies.

Whether the improvements which I had made on the Lands (of which you have herewith the draughts) in the years 1774 and 5 will be of use to Settlers at this day, or not, you

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[who] are on the spot can best determine; they cost me, or were valued to between £1500 and 2000. if they are useful the exemption from rent should be shorter. I thought it necessary to bring the matter into view tho' my expectations from it are small. I am, &c—

P.S. I have a small tract called the round bottom containing abt. 600 Acres, which I would also let. It lyes on the Ohio, opposite to pipe Creek, and a little above Capteening.⁸⁰

80. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To REVEREND WILLIAM McWHIR

Mount Vernon, December 25, 1787.

Sir: I have recd. your letter of yesterday and in answer to it must observe that however desirous I may be to comply with your request and gratifying your wishes I do not consider myself at liberty to give an opinion on the subject, for altho' I was appointed a visitor or Trustee yet having never acted in that capacity or taken any part in the management of the Academy I should not wish to interfere on this occasion, but will readily and cheerfully agree to whatever may be done by the Trustees on the subject.

I am very glad to find that you have agreed to take my Nephews to board with you. I shall feel myself under less apprehension of any irregular and improper conduct on their parts while they are under your immediate inspection, than if they were to be placed with a person to whose advice or direction they would not consider themselves obliged to pay any attention. I am, etc.⁸²

82. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM

Mount Vernon, December 25, 1787.

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Dear Sir: I have recd. your letters of the 9th of Decr. 1786; 27th of Feby. and 2d of March 1787. They should have had an earlier and more regular acknowledgment had not the public business in which I was, in a manner, compelled to engage the last summer, joined to the unremitting attention which my own private affairs require rendered it almost impossible to observe that punctuality with my correspondents that I could wish. I thank you, my dear Sir, for the information which you gave me in your several letters, relative to the state of publick affairs in your Country. I hope the exertions of good men, and a concurrence of circumstances, will finally produce that tranquillity, concord and happiness among you which you so earnestly wish for.

The public attention here is at present wholly employed in considering and animadverting upon the form of Government, proposed by the late convention for these States. The inefficacy of our present general system is acknowledged on all hands, and the proposed one has its opponents but they bear so small a proportion to its friends

that there is little or no doubt of its taking place. Three States have already decided in its favor; two unanimously, and the other by a majority of two to one; these are the only States whose conventions have as yet determined upon the subject, but from every information, the others will be found pretty fully in sentiment with them. The establishment of an energetic general Government will disappoint the hopes and expectations of those who are unfriendly to this Country, give us a national respectability, and enable us to improve those commercial and political advantages which Nature and situation have placed within our reach.

I wrote to you some time since and enclosed a letter from Doctor Franklin to me in answer to one which I had written respecting your Sons being appointed Consul at Marseilles; he applied to Mr. Jay, Minister of foreign Affairs, (whose answer to him I likewise forwarded to you); the result of the application was, that it could not be granted because there existed a resolution of Congress declaring that none but an American citizen should be

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appointed to that Office. Mrs. Washington joins me in the Compliments of the season to Lady Newenham and yourself, and in wishing you many happy returns of it. I am &c.81

81. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To EMBREE & SHOTWELL

Mount Vernon, December 30, 1787.

Gentn: Your letter of the 14th. came duly to hand. Colo. Lee either did not comprehend the price of your Seeds or I have misunderstood him for they are higher than I was led to conceive. However as I want seeds on which I can depend, I will, provided they can be got to me by the end of March *at farthest* and as much sooner as you please, take ten Bushels of red clover seed, and 8 Bushels of Timothy seed; both of the last years growth, clean and good.

If in consideration of the quantity, and the prospect of my dealing with you every year for a large supply of these articles (if I find my interest in it) you should be disposed to lower the retail prices mentioned in your letter to me, it may prove mutually advantageous to you, (if the Seed is sent) to whom, or in what manner the cost of them shall be remitted.

Be so good, upon the receipt of this letter as to inform me if there be a moral certainty of a supply from you in the above mentioned time for should I depend thereon and be disappointed it will be very injurious to me as the whole is for my own sowing,

and the ground will be prepared for it. I am, etc.83

***TO THOMAS JEFFERSON**

Mount Vernon, January 1, 1788.

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Dear Sir: I have received your favor of the 15th. of August, and am sorry that it is not in my power to give any further information relative to the practicability of opening a communication between Lake Erie and the Ohio, than you are already possessed of. I have made frequent enquiries since the time of your writing to me on that subject while Congress were sitting at Annapolis, but could never collect anything that was decided or satisfactory. I have again renewed them, and flatter myself with better prospects of success.

The accts. generally agree as to its being a flat country between the waters of Lake Erie and Big-Beaver; but differ very much with respect to the distance between their sources, their navigation, and the inconveniences which would attend the cutting a canal between them. From the best information I have been able to obtain of that Country, the sources of the Muskingham and Cayohoga approach nearer to each other

83. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

than any water of Lake Erie does to Big-Beaver. But a communication through this River would be more circuitous and difficult; having the Ohio in a greater extent, to ascend; unless the latter could be avoided by opening a communication between James River and the Great Kanhawa, or between the little Kanhawa and the West branch of Monongahela, which is said to be very practicable by a short portage. As testimony thereof, the States of Virginia and Maryland have opened (for I believe it is compleated) a road from the No. branch of Potomack, commencing at, or near, the mouth of Savage River, to the Cheat River, from whence the former are continuing it to the Navigable Water of the little Kanhawa.

The distance between Lake Erie and the Ohio, through the Big-Beaver, is, however, so much less than the rout through the Muskingham, that it would, in my opinion, operate very strongly in favor of opening a canal between the sources of the nearest water of the Lake and Big-Beaver, altho the distance between them should be much greater and the

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operation more difficult than to the Muskingham. I shall omit no opportunity of gaining every information relative to this important subject; and will, with pleasure, communicate to you

whatever may be worthy of your attention.

I did myself the honor to forward to you the plan of Government formed by the Convention, the day after that body rose; but was not a little disappointed, and mortified indeed (as I wished to make the first offering of it to you) to find by a letter from Commode. Jones, dated in New York the 9th. of Novr. that it was, at that time, in his possession. You have, undoubtedly, recd. it, or some other 'ere now, and formed an opinion upon it. The public attention is, at present, wholly engrossed by this important subject. The Legislatures of those States (Rhode Island excepted) which have met since the Constitution has been formed, have readily assented to its being submitted to a Convention chosen by the People. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware are the only States whose Conventions have as yet decided upon it. In the former it was adopted by 46 to 23 and in the two latter unanimously.

Connecticut and Massachusetts are to hold their Conventions on the 1st. and 2d. tuesdays of this month; Maryland in April, Virginia in June, and upon the whole, it appears, so far as I have had an opportunity of learning the opinions of the people in the several States, that it will be received. There will, undoubtedly, be more or less opposition to its being adopted in most of the States; and in none a more formidable one than in this; as many influential characters here have taken a decided part against it, among whom are Mr. Henry, Colo. Mason, Govr. Randolph and Colo R. H. Lee; but from every information

which I have been able to obtain, I think there will be a majority in its favor notwithstanding their dissention. In New York a considerable opposition will also be given.

I am much obliged to you, my dear Sir, for the Acct. which you gave me of the general state of Affairs in Europe. I am glad to hear that the Assemblée des Notables has been

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productive of good in France. The abuse of the finances being disclosed to the King, and the Nation, must open their eyes, and lead to the adoption of such measures as will prove beneficial to them in future. From the public papers it appears that the Parliaments of the several Provinces, and particularly that of Paris, have acted with great spirit and resolution. Indeed the rights of Mankind, the priviledges of the people, and the true principles of liberty, seem to have been more generally discussed and better understood throughout Europe since the American revolution than they were at any former period.

Altho' the finances of France and England were such as led you to suppose, at the time you wrote to me, would prevent a rupture between those two powers, yet, if we credit the concurrent acct. from every quarter, there is little doubt but that they have commenced hostilities before this. Russia and the Porte

have formally began the contest, and from appearances (as given to us) it is not improbable but that a pretty general war will be kindled in Europe. should this be the case, we shall feel more than ever the want of an efficient general Government to regulate our Commercial concerns, to give us a national respectability, and to connect the political views and interests of the several States under one head in such a manner as will effectually prevent them from forming seperate, improper, or indeed any connection, with the European powers which can involve them in their political disputes. For our situation is such as makes it not only unnecessary, but extremely imprudent for us to take a part in their quarrels; and whenever a contest happens among them, if we wisely and properly improve the advantages which nature has given us, we may be benifitted by their folly, provided we conduct ourselves with circumspection and under proper restrictions, for I perfectly agree with you, that an extensive speculation, a spirit of gambling, or the introduction of any thing which will divert our attention from Agriculture, must be extremely prejudicial, if not ruinous to us. but I conceive under an energetic general Government such regulations might be made, and such measures taken, as would render this Country the asylum of pacific and industrious characters from all parts of Europe, would encourage the cultivation of the Earth by the high price which its products would command, and would

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draw the wealth, and wealthy men of other Nations, into our bosom, by giving security to property, and

liberty to its holders. I have the honor &c.84

To REVEREND WILLIAM GORDON

Mount Vernon, January 1, 1788.

Revd. Sir: I have recd. your letter of the 6th. of Septr. with flower-seeds accompanying it, for which I beg you will accept my best thanks. I am glad to find by your letter, that you have begun printing your history of the revolution; you have my best wishes for its success.

Our information from Europe is so various and contradictory as to render it still doubtful whether a rupture will take place between England and France; some accounts have even gone so far as to declare that hostilities have already commenced

84. From the original in the *Jefferson Papers* in the Library of Congress.

others, that vigorous preparations are making on both sides and a war is inevitable; and others again mention pacific dispositions of the Courts. But let their political views and interests be what they may I hope we shall have wisdom enough not to take a part in their quarrels.

I would have forwarded to you a copy of the Constitution proposed by the late Convention for the United States, but as you must undoubtedly have seen it before this, through the medium of the newspapers, or some other publication, the necessity of my doing it is superseded. I have the pleasure, however, to inform you, that there is the greatest prospect of its being adopted by the people. It has its opponents, as any system formed by the wisdom of man would undoubtedly have; but they bear but a small proportion to its friends, and differ among themselves in their objections. Pennsylvania, Delaware, and

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New Jersey have already decided in its favor, the first by a majority of two to one, and the two last unanimously. The dispositions in the other States, so far as I have been able to learn, are equally favorable, at least with Pennsylvania, and it is expected that their conventions will give a similar decision. New York, and possibly this State, may prove exceptions. I am &c.85

85. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PETERSON & TAYLOR

Mount Vernon, January 5, 1788.

Gentlemen: When I wrote to you last upon the subject of furnishing me with scantling, Plank &c. agreeable to the enclosed bill we could not come to any determination with respect to the matter, because the price of herrings, in which I proposed to make payment, could not be fixed. I now make the following proposal, viz, I will allow you 6/per Hundred for the scantling, reduced measure, 6/ per Hundred for the inch plank and 7/6 ped [sic] do for inch and quarter Do. As I understand you will want a large quantity of herrings in the fishing season, you shall give a preference to my landing for a supply provided a price can, at that time, be agreed upon between us; if it cannot, I will pay you for the scantling &c. in Cash after the fishing season is over as I have allotted the fish, or the money arising from the sale of them to supply me with the enclosed bill of scantling. The scantling must be furnished and delivered at my Landing by or before the first of March as I must have the frame &c. prepared before the season for cutting grass comes on when my Carpenters will then be obliged to go into the field.

If you accede to the above proposal and will supply the

scantling at the time mentioned you will write me a line by the bearer that will put the matter upon a certainty. I am, etc.

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P.S. If you cannot furnish the scantling so soon as mentioned above you will be so good as to let me know the earliest period in which you can supply it.86

A BILL OF SCANTLING AND PLANK TO BE PROVIDED BY PETERSON & TAYLOR

feet Inches 170 Sleepers 14 long 10 by 4 This scantling cannot be furnished too soon; at any rate it will be wanted in the month of March, Feby. would be preferred, infinitely 125 Joists 16 do 8 by 4 6 Plates 30 do 9 by 6 6 do 15 do 9 by 6 2 do 30 do 8 by 6 8 do 24 do 8 by 6 160 Rafters 6 inches at bottom and 4½ at top by 3 inches 20 do 40 Rafters 12½ ft. long 6 and 4½ by 3

86. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

40 Window beams 16 do 4 by 3 20 do 11 do 4 by 3 31 Studs 10 do 6 by 4 16 do 11 do 4 by 3 8 Rails 15 do 6 by 4

Note: The whole of the above must be surved, and good of its kind, Pine, or it will not answer my purpose. 10,000 feet of Inch plank (as much of it as possible to be seasoned), and wide as it can conveniently be obtained. 2,000 feet of Inch and quarter Do seasoned, if to be had and wide also.87

To PETERSON & TAYLOR

Mount Vernon, January 7, 1788.

Gentn: I have recd. your letter of the 5th. inst. wherein you mention your compliance with the terms proposed so far as to furnish the Scantling, but leave the time for the delivery of it undetermined; this will wholly set aside the object which I had in view in wishing to contract with you to supply me with the bill sent you on Saturday, for I have not the smallest doubt of being able to furnish myself with Scantling upon lower terms than I have proposed to you provided the time which I have allotted to have it framed would permit me

87. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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On Jan. 5, 1788, Charles Hagan entered into an agreement with Washington to serve as a brickmaker at £4:10 per month of 26 working days. This agreement, signed by Washington and Hagan, is in the *Washington Papers*. On it is the note that Hagan commenced work on Apr. 16, 1788.

to take the chance of procuring it from the Vessels which pass from the Eastern Shore up to Alexandria (or if I could convey a letter seasonably to a Mr. Joseph De Shields⁸⁸ of Maryland) who as I have been informed by Gentlemen of veracity that it has been and can generally be bought for 12/ per hundred measured side and edge which makes a difference of near 25 per Cent less than what I have engaged to give you. You therefore see, Sir. that my object in contracting with you is that I may depend upon its being delivered at a particular time and not subject myself to the hazard of not procuring it in time for my people to frame it before the season for cutting grass and Harvest come on. I am very willing to make any reasonable allowance for delays occasioned by weather or the River being blocked up, but still I cannot consent to leave the time of delivering it wholly unfixed, and would thank you to let me know. I am, etc.⁸⁹

88. Joseph Dashield, of Salisbury, Md.

89. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To GOVERNOR EDMUND RANDOLPH

Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

Dear Sir: The letter, which you did me the honor of writing to me on the 27th Ulto. with the enclosure,⁹² came duly to hand. I receive them as a fresh instance of your friendship and attention. For both I thank you.

The diversity of Sentiments upon the important matter which has been submitted to the People, was as much expected as it is regretted, by me. The various passions and

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motives, by which men are influenced are concomitants of fallibility, engrafted into our nature for the purposes of [the] unerring wisdom; but had I entertained a latent hope (at the time you moved to have the Constitution submitted to a second Convention) that a more perfect form would be agreed to, in a word that any Constitution would be adopted under the impressions and instructions of the members, the publications, which have taken place since would have eradicated every form of it. How do the sentiments of the influential characters in *this* State who are opposed to the Constitution, and have favoured the public with their opinions, quadrate with each other? Are they not at variance on some of the most important points? If the opponents in the *same* State cannot agree in *their* principles

92. Randolph's letter is in the *Washington Papers* but the pamphlet, *A Letter...on the Federal Constitution* (1787), is not found therein.

what prospect is there of a coalescence with the advocates of the measure when the different views, and jarring interests of so wide and extended an Empire are to be brought forward and combated?

To my Judgment, it is more clear than ever, that an attempt to amend the Constitution which is submitted, would be productive of more heat and greater confusion than can well be conceived. There are some things in the new form, I will readily acknowledge, wch. never did, and I am persuaded never will, obtain my *cordial* approbation; but I then did conceive, and do now most firmly believe, that, in the aggregate, it is the best Constitution that can be obtained at this Epoque, and that this, or a dissolution of the Union awaits our choice, and are the only alternatives before us. Thus believing, I had not, nor have I now any hesitation in deciding on which to lean.

I pray your forgiveness for the expression of these sentiments. In acknowledging the receipt of your Letter on this subject, it was hardly to be avoided, although I am well

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disposed to let the matter rest entirely on its own merits, and mens minds to their own workings. With very great esteem &c.93

93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

My dear Sir: I have received your letters of the 28th of June, 1786 and 12th of May, 1787. In the former you mention your having just returned from Holland and were so obliging as to give me an account of the state of political affairs in that Country. y. Since the time of your writing their intestine disputes have been brought to a crisis and appear to have terminated rather against the Patriots. What changes may be made in their Government; what revolutions in their political œconomy, and how far their connections with the several powers in Europe may be affected by the termination is yet unknown to us.

I am very glad to hear that the Assemblée des Notables has been productive of good in France; the State of your finances was really alarming and required a strict investigation and the sanative hand of the nation to restore them to their proper tone.

I now begin to hope that the period is not very distant, when this country will make a more respectable figure in the eyes of Europe than it has hitherto done. The constitution formed by the late Convention appears, as far as my information extends, to be highly

acceptable to the people of these States. Jersey, Delaware and Pensylvania have already decided in its favor, the two former unanimously and the latter by a majority of two to one; the Conventions in the other States have not yet determined upon it but their dispositions are very favourable. Whenever this Government is established we shall regain thus [sic] confidence and credit among the European powers which a want of energy in the present confederation has deprived us of; and shall likewise feel the benefit of those commercial

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and political advantages which our situation holds out to us. This event must be extremely pleasing to every friend of humanity and peculiarly so to you and others, who must feel interested in the happiness and welfare of this country, from the part which you took in establishing her liberty and independence.

I lament with you, my dear Sir, that the distance between us is so great, as to deprive us of the pleasure and satisfaction of a frequent and regular communication by letter, for it often happens either through the inattention of the person to whom letters are committed, or from some other cause, that they do not come to hand till months after their date. You will please to accept the compliments of the season with my sincere wishes for many happy returns of it to you, and believe me to be &c.⁹⁵

95. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PIERRE ROUSILLES⁹⁴

January 8, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter and memorial of the 12 of Augt. and in answer to them can only say, that however just and reasonable your demands may be, and however desirous I am to assist the injured in obtaining Justice, it is not in my power to do anything more than appears, by your memorial, to have been already done, that is, to refer you to 'the boards and officers which take cognizance of matters of that nature. As I have, long since, lain aside all publick business and live 300 miles from New York where the Congress sits and the publick Offices are established, I cannot, with any degree of propriety, interfere in your case. I am, etc.

P. S. I return your original documents which you may have occasion for.⁹³

94. Of Bordeaux, France.

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93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To NICOLAS SIMON AND LUCRETIA WILHEMINA VAN WINTER⁹⁸

Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

I have received your letter of the 26th. Feby., accompanied by the Poem entitled "Germanicus" I consider your sending the latter to me as a mark of polite attention which merits my warmest acknowledgments, I beg you to accept my thanks for that, as well as for the many obliging expressions in your letter.

The muses have always been revered in every age, and in all Countries where letters and civilization have made any progress. As they tend to alleviate the misfortunes and soften the sorrows of life they will ever be respected by the humane and virtuous. I am, etc.⁹⁹

98. Mrs. Van Winter's maiden name was Van Merken.

99. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The original of this letter is said to be in Amsterdam.

To WAKELIN WELCH & SON

[January 8, 1788.]

Gentn: I have recd. your letter of the 7th. of March and 14th. of July, the former enclosing my acct. current, in which my drafts upon you &c. are justly and properly Stated.

The seeds, Ploughs &c sent by the Mary, Capt. Andrews, arrived safe, but some of the former were injured by being put into the hold of the Vessel; they were in casks, and the Capt. said he did not know the contents of them or they should have been deposited in a more suitable place; however, upon the whole, they arrived in much better order than those things generally do.

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I thank you for your attention to Mr. Youngs two drafts for £11.2 and £9.12.6 should I have occasion to apply to that Gentn. for anything more I shall advise you thereof, and your further attention to his bills will be very obliging.

Mrs. Bloxham's receiving £10.1.10 of you, which she had paid to Mr. Peacey for seeds on my acct. was perfectly agreeable to me; while I was in Philadelphia last summer I drew upon you for £100 in favor of Robert Morris Esqr. and advised you regularly thereof. I am, etc.⁹⁷

97. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE COUNTESS D'ESSARTS¹

Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

Madam: I have received your letter of the first of May and the books accompanying it which you did me the honor to send me.

The works of those men who have dedicated their time and fortunes to the purposes of humanity will always be read with pleasure by the good and virtuous citizens of every country, as they contain the pure sentiments of a noble mind divested of local prejudices and particular attachments. I must therefore beg, Madam, that you will accept my warmest acknowledgments for the favor you have conferred by sending me the works of M. de Chamousset. I have the honor, etc.²

1. Daughter of C. H. P. de Chamousset, whose *Works*, in two volumes, were published in 1787.

2. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To MONSIEUR BOURDON³

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Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

Sir: I have recd. your letter of the 6th. of Decr. 1786,4 wherein you request me to represent your situation to Congress, and apply to that body, in your behalf, for a grant of land in some part of the United States where you may form a settlement.

Altho' no incident in life could afford me more pleasure than to see all those who have exerted themselves in the cause of this country amply recompensed for their meritorious services, and however desirous I may be to contribute all in my power towards there obtaining a compensation, yet I cannot, consistent with the declaration which I made when I quitted my publick employment, bring forward applications of this nature to Congress. I hope, Sir, you will not think that act a singular part, with respect to you by not complying with your request, when I assure you I have ever declined the repeated applications of this kind which have been made to me.

I think it is not improbable but that the Court of France, upon a reconsideration of the services of the Count de Grass, may be induced to recompence the merits of him and his friends in the manner which they deserve. I am, etc.2

3. There are five different Bourdons listed in the French Navy in *Combattants Français de la Guerre Americaine* (Washington, Government Printing Office: 1905).

4. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

2. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SAMUEL ATHAWES

Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 26th. of July last, informing me of the death of our much esteemed and worthy friend George William Fairfax Esqr. I sincerely condole with

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you and his other friends in England upon this occasion. Altho' the precarious state of his health for several years past, must have prepared his friends, in some measure, for his death, yet the event could not take place without being sincerely lamented by all who know him.

The appointment of Executors and Trustees in each country for his Estates and affairs in each, seperately and without any dependance on each other was in my opinion, a very judicious and necessary step; for the delays and inconveniences which the distance would unavoidably produce, would have been an insuperable objection to their being joined, not to mention the difficulties, which must have arisen from the difference of the laws upon this point, in the two countries.

The small case, which you directed to the care of Colo. Burwell was forwarded by him and came safe to hand. I have sent the watch to Mr. Fairfax, and the letters to their respective addresses. Notwithstanding the long and uninterrupted friendship which subsisted between Colo. Fairfax and myself, and however desirous I may be

to give every proof of my affection for him and his amiable relict yet I must decline acting as an Executor for his Estate here. The deranged situation of my own private affairs, occasioned by my long absence from home during the late war, and the continual applications which are made to me for information, advice or assistance, in consequence of a publick office which I sustained, require my constant and unremitting attention, and would prevent a faithful discharge of the trust on my part, if I should accept it. I am &c.96

96. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM McINTOSH

Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

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Sir: I have received your letter of the 28 of August⁷ enclosing your plan of Government⁸ suggested for the United States of America. As a Citizen of these States, I return you my best thanks for the interest you take in their happiness and prosperity; and as an individual, you will please to accept of my acknowledgments for your polite attention in sending to me your sentiments upon so

7. August 20.

8. McIntosh's letter and scheme of government, dated from Avignon, France, is in the *Washington Papers*.

important a subject.

The want of an efficient General Government in this country is universally felt and acknowledged. The convention, which met at Philadelphia in May last for the purpose of forming a Constitution for the United States have handed to the People one (of which I now enclose you a copy) for their consideration and acceptance; it is to be submitted to conventions chosen by the people in the several States and by them approved or rejected. Two⁹ States only have as yet decided upon it, two of which accepted it unanimously and the other by a majority of 2 to 1. Similar dispositions seem to prevail in the other States and there is no doubt but that they will give it a determination equally favorable.

When a Government is established in America that can give energy to its laws and security to property, it is not to be doubted, that many persons of respectability and interest from the old world will make a valuable addition to the citizens of the new. I am &c.¹⁰

9. Three.

10. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To ROBERT FENNING⁵

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Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letters of the 5th. of Sepr. In answer to which I can only say, that I am not at present in want of a person of your description, but if you are desirous of settling in this country, and will let me know precisely what your terms and expectations are, I think it is very probable I shall hear of some Gentleman who would be willing to engage you for the purpose of superintending their farms, provided your knowledge and experience in husbandry &c. is such as you have mentioned and you can bring authentic testimonials thereof and your terms are not extravagant. I am, etc.⁶

5. Of London

6. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To MAUDUIT DU PLESSIS

Mount Vernon, January 8, 1788.

Sir: I have to acknowledge the reception of your three letters, viz of the 12th. of Feby. the 26th. of March and the 20th. July. I was exceedingly sorry to hear of the disasters which you met with after you left this place, before you reached Georgia, and was very unhappy to find, when you arrived there, that your expectations, with respect to your property were so much disappointed, and that your misfortunes were aggravated by the death of your family.¹¹ I sincerely regret the causes which induced you to Return to Europe, not only on account of the loss which America will sustain of a person who would have been a most valuable citizen, but that a worthy man should leave the country with unfavourable impressions and wounded feelings.

I congratulate you upon your safe arrival in France and hope you will receive that degree of happiness and satisfaction in your return to your family and friends which will compensate for the misfortunes you sustained here.

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Mrs. Washington has recd. the fans which you were so polite to send to her from Charleston and begs you would accept her best thanks for them. I have likewise received the Ribbon which you did me the honor to send to me and request you to accept my warmest acknowledgements for that as

11. His surgeon and domestics. Du Plessis's wife and children were in France.

well as for your obliging offer to execute anything which I might have occasion to do in France, and the very polite expressions with which your letters abounded.

It would give me a particular pleasure to comply with your request by sending you an engraved copy of my portrait similar to the one which you saw in my dining Room; but as that was a present to me from the Engraver, Mr. Brown of London,¹² and the only one of the kind that I ever saw, it is not in my power to gratify your wish.

When I was in Philadelphia last summer I signed a number of Diplomas for the foreign officers, members of the Cincinnati, which were sent by the Secretary General to the Counts De Estaing and Rochambeau this, I presume, will supercede the necessity of my sending one to you as you desired. I have the honor, etc.¹³

12. This engraving was, apparently, made by Valentine Green, of London, from a portrait painted by Joseph Brown, after Charles Willson Peale. The engraving was published in 1785, and is in Charles Henry Hart's *Catalogue of Engraved Portraits of Washington*, (New York: 1904), p. 12.

13. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PETERSON & TAYLOR

Mount Vernon, January 9, 1788.

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Gentn: Your letter of the 7th. inst. came duly to hand. I accede to the proposal therein made, for you to have the Scantling and plank delivered at my landing, agreeable to the bill sent you, in all the month of March, as you say it will be for your interest to deliver it sooner if possible, it will be infinitely more pleasing to me to have it done. You will please to have it delivered at my fishing landing near the ferry, as it will be more convenient for me there than at any other place. I expect the scantling will be of a good quality agreeable to promise, and if any of the plank can be had seasoned, particularly the Inch and quarter, it will be very desirable. I am, etc.¹⁴

14. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN FITZGERALD

Mount Vernon, January 9, 1788.

Dear Sir: In a card I sent you the other day, at the sametime that I enquired if your express brought any answer from Govrs. Johnson and Lee I requested to be informed at what precise spot the meeting of the directors¹⁵ was appointed to be held, I should be glad now to know.

I had made my arrangements for setting off on Saturday to proceed on this side of the River; and will do so if I am able but having taken a very severe cold this day Senight in a night ride from Alexandria I have been confined almost ever since getting little rest from a continual cough (which has greatly disordered my breast) and by slow fevers which has constantly attended it.

As I am very desirous that this should be a full meeting, I will make it a point to attend, if the State of my health on Saturday will in any degree enable me to encounter the ride, cold houses and Bad Beds. If it should not I will thank you for assigning the reason (when you get up) for my non attendance. Every paper which we may have occasion for, I hope

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will be carried. Colo. Humphreys proposed to accompany me. Colo. Gilpin (with Mr. Smith)¹⁶ I am informed propose doing

15. Of the Potomac Company.

16. Clement Smith, one of the directors of the Potomac Company.

some work in their way on the other side of the river. How far it will be convenient to you, to Join our party (if I should be able to go) you are best able to decide, of the pleasure we should have in your Company you can have no doubt. I am, etc.¹⁷

To MICHAEL RYAN¹⁸

Mount Vernon, January 9, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 23d. of December¹⁹ wherein you express a wish that I would become a Joint proprietor with yourself and some other Gentlemen in a large tract of Land which you have upon the Western waters of Virginia. I am much obliged to you, Sir, for your politeness in making the proposal to me and submitting the plan of settling the land &c. to my consideration. But I must decline taking any part in it, however advantageous the terms may be, and however desirous I am to promote any laudable plan for the settlement of the Country; for the lands which I already possess in those parts are untenanted, and I am at present endeavouring to have them seated, this will engage me as extensively in business of this nature as I wish to be, and operates as one strong reason against my embarking any further in it, another, still more weighty, is the

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

18. Formerly Inspector General of Pennsylvania.

19. Ryan's letter was written from Fredericksburg, Va.

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constant and unremitting attention which the arrangement and cultivation of my estate here requires. I am, etc.¹⁷

To FREDERICK WEISSENFELS

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 10th. of December²³ in answer to that, as well as those which you wrote to me in June last, I am sorry to inform you that I cannot, with any propriety, make application to Congress^{had}²⁴ the offices to bestow or any other publick body in your behalf for an appointment; because it would be acting directly contrary to a resolution which I made, when I quitted the publick service, not to make application for, or interfere with appointments of any kind.

It is a matter of regret as well as surprize that you should apply to me in an affair of this nature in preference to those persons among whom you live and have been more immediately employ'd and who must, from

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

23. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

24. Careless copying. The meaning evidently was: "which has the office to bestow."

their long acquaintance with you, have a much better knowledge of your merits and sufferings than I can be supposed to have. If you expect relief from the Cincinnati, it is to the State Society you must look for it, or apply to the General-meeting, when convened, for I cannot, as an individual, transact any business of this kind relating to the Society. I am, etc.²²

To RICHARD BUTLER

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 30th. of November accompanied by the Indian Vocabulary²⁰ which you have been so obliging as to forward to me. I am so far from thinking any apology necessary on your part for not having furnished me with the Vocabulary at an earlier period, that I assure you it is a matter of surprise to me to find that you have been able to compleat a work of such difficulty and magnitude, as this appears to be, in so short a time, under the pain which you must have suffered, and the delays occasioned by your misfortune in breaking your leg.

The pleasing satisfaction which

22. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On January 11 Washington wrote to William Irvine a letter which was practically identical with that portion of this letter which is inclosed in brackets. He added: "As a determination of the points referred to, may tend to promote the commerce, population and welfare of the Country, I know it will, to you my dear Sir, be a Sufficient apology for any trouble which this letter may give." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

20. A copy of the Vocabulary (separately bound) is in the *Washington Papers*, and contains an extract of Butler's letter to Washington, Nov. 30, 1787, which letter is not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

you must enjoy from a reflection that you have exerted yourself to throw light upon the original history of this Country, to gratify the curiosity of the Philosopher, and to forward researches into the probable connection and communication between the northern parts of America and those of Asia must make you a more ample compensation for the laborious task which you have executed than my warmest acknowledgments, which, however I must beg you to accept.

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The observations contained in your letter, respecting the different tribes of Indians inhabiting the Western Country, The traditions which prevail among them, and the reasoning deduced therefrom, are very valuable and may lead to some useful discoveries. Those works which are found upon the Ohio²¹ and other traces of the country's having been once inhabited by a race of people more ingenious, at least, if not more civilized, than those who at present dwell there, have excited the attention and inquiries of the curious to learn from whence they came, whither they are gone, and something of their history; any clue, therefore, which can lead to a knowledge of these must be gratefully received.

As you have had opportunities of gaining extensive knowledge and information respecting the western territory, its situation, rivers, and the face of the Country, [I must beg the

21. The mound builders.

favor of you, my dear Sir, to resolve the following quæries, either from your own knowledge, or certain information (as well to gratify my own curiosity, as to enable me to satisfy several Gentlemen of distinction in other Countries who have applied to me for information upon the subject.)

1st. What is the face of the Country between the sources or Canoe navigation of the Cayahoga (which empties itself into Lake Erie) and the Big-Beaver and between the Cayahoga and the Muskingum?

2d. The distance between the waters of the Cayahoga and each of the two rivers abovementioned?

3d. Would it be practicable (and not very expensive) to cut a canal between the Cayahoga and either of the above rivers so as to open a communication between the waters of lake Erie and the Ohio?

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4th. Whether there is any more direct; practicable, and easy communication between the waters of lake Erie and those of the Ohio (by which the Fur and Peltry of the Upper Country can be transported) than these?

Any information you can give me relative to the above quæries, from your own knowledge, will be most agreeable; but if that is not sufficiently accurate for you to decide upon, the best and most authentic accounts of others will be very acceptable.]

Your letter to the Marquis de la Fayette shall be particularly attended to, and forwarded with mine. I am etc.²²

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1788.

My dear Sir: I stand indebted to you for your favors of the 20th. and 26th. Ult. and I believe for that of the 14th. also, and their enclosures. It does not appear to me, that there is any *certain* criterion in this State, by which a decided judgment can be formed, as to the opinion which is entertained by the mass of its citizens with respect to the new Constitution. My belief on this occasion is, that whenever the matter is brought to a final decision, that not only a majority, but a large one, will be found in its favor. That the opposition should have gained strength, among the members of the Assembly at Richmond, admitting the fact, is not to be wondered at when it is considered that the powerful adversaries to the Constitution are all assembled at that place, acting conjunctly, with the promulgated

22. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On January 11 Washington wrote to William Irvine a letter which was practically identical with that portion of this letter which is inclosed in brackets. He added: "As a determination of the points referred to, may tend to promote the commerce, population and welfare of the

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Country, I know it will, to you my dear Sir, be a Sufficient apology for any trouble which this letter may give." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

sentiments of Col. R— H— L— as auxiliary. It is said however, and I believe it may be depended upon, that the latter, (tho' he may retain his sentiments) has withdrawn, or means to withdraw his opposition; because as he has expressed himself, or as others have done it for him, he finds himself in bad company; such as with M— Sm—th25 &c,&c. His brother, Francis L. Lee on whose judgment the family place much reliance, is decidedly in favor of the new form, under a conviction that it is the best that can be obtained, and because it promises energy, stability, and that security which is, or ought to be, the wish of every good Citizen of the Union.

How far the determination of the question before the debating club (of which I made mention in a former letter) may be considered as auspicious of the final decision of the Convention, I shall not prognosticate; but in this club, the question it seems, was determined by a very large majority in favor of the Constitution; but of all arguments which may be used at this time, none will be so forcible, I expect, as that nine States have acceded to it. and if the unanimity, or majorities in those which are to follow, are as great as in those which have acted, the power of those arguments will be irresistable. The Governor has given his reasons to the Publick for with holding his Signature to the Constitution A copy of them I send you.

Our Assembly has been long in Session, employed chiefly (according to my information) in rectifying the mistakes of the last, and committing others for emendations at the next. Yet "who so wise as we are" We are held in painful suspence with respect to European Intelligence. Peace or War,

25. Meriwether Smith.

by the last accts. are equally balanced a grain added to either scale will give it the preponderancy. I have no regular corrispondt. in Massachusetts; otherwise, as the

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occasional subject of a letter I should have had no objection to the communication of my sentiments on the proposed Government as they are unequivocal and decided. With the greatest esteem etc.

P. S. I have this momt. been informed, that the Assembly of No Carolina have postponed the meeting of the Convention of that State until July; this seems evidently calculated to take the Tone from Virginia.²⁶

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1788.

My dear Marqs: I fear my dear Marqs., you will believe me to have been remiss in attentions to you. My last letters I find, have been unaccountably concentrated in the same hands, and unreasonably delayed; entirely contrary to my expectation. When you have received them by the Chevalier Paul Jones, you will acquit me of any intended or real neglect. One of these letters, containing the form of Government which

26. From the text printed in the sales catalogue of the *Washington-Madison Papers* (McGuire Collection, 1892). The copy in the "Letter Book" shows unmistakable evidence of careless, not to say ignorant, transcribing, and the texts printed by Ford and Sparks vary from this and each other in unexpected and unjustifiable details.

has been submitted by the fœderal Convention to the People of these States I wished to have got to your hands by the first conveyance, as it was my intention that you should be among the first to be informed of the proceedings of that body.

It is with great pleasure I transmit to you, by this conveyance, a Vocabulary of the Shawanese and Delaware languages. Your perfect acquaintance with Genl. Richard Butler, the same worthy officer who served under your orders, and who has taken the trouble to compile them, supersedes the necessity of my saying any thing in support

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of their veracity [and] correctness. I likewise send a shorter specimen of the language of the southern Indians. It was procured by that ingenious gentleman, the Hble. Mr. Hawkins,²⁷ a member of Congress from North Carolina, and lately a Commissioner from the United States to the Indians of the South. I heartily wish the attempt of that singular great character, the Empress of Russia, to form a universal Dictionary, may be attended with the merited Success.

To know the affinity of tongues seems to be one step towards promoting the affinity of nations. Would to god, the harmony of nations was an object that lay nearest to the hearts of Sovereigns; and that the incentives to peace (of which commerce and facility of understanding each other are not the most inconsiderable) might be daily increased! Should the present or any other efforts of mine to procure information respecting the different dialects of the Aborigines in America, serve to reflect a ray of light on the obscure subject of language in general, I shall be highly gratified. For I love to indulge the contemplation of human nature in a progressive state of improvement

27. Benjamin Hawkins.

and melioration; and if the idea would not be considered visionary and chimerical, I could fondly hope, that the present plan of the great Potentate of the North might, in some measure, lay the foundation for that assimilation of language, which, producing assimilation of manners and interests, which, should one day remove many of the causes of hostility from amongst mankind.

At this moment, however, it appears by the current of intelligence from your side of the Atlantic, that but too many motives and occasions exist for interrupting the public tranquillity. A war between the Russians and Turks, we learn, has broken out. How far, or in what manner, this may involve other nations seems to us, at this distance, uncertain. Extraordinary speculations and expectations arise from the conduct of the King of Prussia²⁸ in the Dutch, and the Emperor of Germany²⁹ in the Austrian Netherlands.

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Nothing as yet, has come to our knowledge, which indicates with certainty, whether hostilities will take place between France and England, or, in that event, how extensively the flames of war will spread. We are apprehensive that we have but too much reason to bewail the fate of the Dutch Patriots.

To guard against the similar calamities of domestic discord or foreign interposition, and effectually to secure our liberties with all the benefits of an efficient Government, is now the

28. Frederick William II.

29. Joseph II.

important subject that engrosses the attention of all our part of America. You will doubtless have seen, in the public papers, in what manner the new Constitution has been attacked and defended. There have been some compositions published in its defence, which I think will, at least, do credit to American genius. I dare say its principles and tendencies have, also, before this time been amply discussed in Europe. Here, that is in United America, it is strongly advocated by a very great and decided majority. The Conventions, in the States of New Jersey and Delaware, have *unanimously* adopted it: and that of Pennsylvania by a majority of two to one. No other State has yet had an opportunity of deciding. New England (with the exception of Rhode Island, which seems itself, politically speaking, to be an exception from all that is good) it is believed will cheerfully and fully accept it: and there is little doubt but that the Southern States will do the same. In Virginia and New York its fate is somewhat more questionable: though, in my private opinion, I have no hesitation to believe there will be a Clear majority in its favor, in the former: of the latter I can say nothing from my own knowledge, its advocates, there, generally conclude that they shall carry it. Upon this summary view, you will perceive, my dear Marquis, the highest probability exists that the proposed Constitution will be adopted by more than nine States, at some period early in the coming summer.

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To morrow I shall set out on a journey to view the progress which has been made in clearing the upper falls of the Potomack. This business, in general, has been attended with as much success as could possibly have been expected. I have nothing more to add, but that Mrs. Washington and those under this roof desire to be affectionately presented to yourself and those under yours. For myself, my dear Marquis, I am etc.

P. S. Under cover with this letter, is one from Genl. Butler which I forward to you at his request. as this Gentleman's knowledge of the Indian languages is more extensive and accurate in the Shawane than it is in the Delaware and the vocabulary less copious in the latter than in the former, I send you the Delaware Indian and English spelling Book by Mr. Zeisberger,³⁰ as it may throw light on the subject.³¹

30. Rev. David Zeisberger, Moravian missionary.

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1788.

My dear Sir: I beg you to accept of my thanks for your obliging favor of the 11th. Ult; which, owing to the dullness of the season, and want of matter to amuse you, has lain unacknowledged till this time.

Three States, to wit. Pensylvania New Jersey, and Delaware having adopted the New Constitution in so decisive a manner and those of New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut having discovered such favourable sentiments of it, places the final Success of it, in my judgment, upon unequivocal ground. Maryland, most unquestionably, will adopt it; from No. Carolina (so far as accts. have been received in this quarter) the disposition of the People towards it is favourable; from the States South of it I have no direct intelligence;

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but in the situation Georgia is, nothing but insanity, or a desire of becoming the Allies of the Spaniards or Savages, can disincline them to a Governmt. which holds out the prospect of relief from its present distresses. The opposition in this State, tho' headed by very influential characters; is not, in my opinion (tho' I may be an incompetent judge, never going from home, and seeing no body except those who call upon me) much to be apprehended. My opinion of the matter is, that the New form on the final decision in our Convention, will be acceded to by a large majority. The determination of New York, of all others, seems most problematical; and yet, I can hardly entertain an idea that She will be disposed to stand alone, or with one or two others, if the States bordering on her should Confederate.

Whether War or Peace will be the issue of the dispute between France and England, seems as yet undecided. If the former, we shall certainly get involved, unless there is energy enough in Government to restrain our People within proper bounds; and that the power of the present Government is inadequate to accomplish this, I believe none will deny.

Mrs. Washington joins me in offering compliments of congratulations to Mrs. Knox and yourself on the increase of yr. family by the birth of a son, and I pray you to accept the acknowledgment of my sense of the honor you have conferred on me by giving him my name. I hope he will live to enjoy it long after I have taken my departure for the world of spirits and that he may prove a blessing and comfort to you both in your declining years. With sentiments of the greatest esteem I am etc.

PS. Colo. Humphreys has lost no flesh since he came to Virginia. He undertakes a journey tomorrow with me to the Upper falls of this River whither I am called on business of the Potomack Company. How far this ride, The cold weather &ca. may effect a change can best be determined after our return in about ten days.

[MS.H.S.]

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To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, January 11, 1788.

Sir: The People on board Mr. Spriggs Vessel have been already supplied with Provisions, and shall receive every other aid they may require, and I can give. The conduct either of the Skipper, or your Overseer, has been egregiously wrong.

The Vessel, it seems, came up in the night of thursday; but not till near dusk on friday had I any information of it, and then by [way] of enquiry from your People after their Overseer, whom they said was put on shore at my point, opposite to Mr. Digges and had not at that time Joined them. In strong terms I then urged them to go immediately on board and get the Vessel as near as possible to my warf *that night* as there was every appearance of a severe frost. Instead of doing this the Vessel kept her position (more than a mile of) and, as I expected, was frozen up next morning and unable to deliver a grain of the Corn until the afternoon of Saturday Then but 16 Barrels whereas had they stopped on thursday the whole might have been landed before friday evening and the Vessel discharged, as I had a large Boat of my own and had collected my Plantation Carts (as soon as I was advised of the Vessels being here) to expedite the work.

Mr. Whites letter is returned to you and I should be glad to know precisely whether I am to expect any and what part of the £200 of which you assured me in Philadelphia I might absolutely rely and the half of which you informed me in November, should be sent to me by your Servant in ten days if you could not get the residue? I have put the Sheriff of this County off 3 times, if he comes again, I must if I have no further expectn. from you suffer him to make distress, as I raised nothing last year for sale, and allotted this money for the payment of my taxes.

Mrs. Washington and myself would

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have been glad to have seen you and Mrs. Mercer here. This she would do still. In the morning I shall leave home for a meeting of the Directors of the Potomack Co. at the Falls of the Shanandoah from whence I do not expect to be returned in less than ten days. I am, etc.³²

To CHARLES CARTER

Mount Vernon, January 12, 1788.

Dear Sir: I find that an extract from my letter to you,³³ is running through all the newspapers; and published in that of Baltimore with the addition of my name. Altho' I have no disinclination to the promulgation of my Sentiments on the proposed Constitution (not having concealed them on any occasion) yet I must nevertheless confess, that it gives me pain to see the hasty and indigested production of a private letter, handed to the public, to be animadverted upon by the adversaries of the new Government.

32. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

33. See Washington's letter to Charles Carter, Dec. 14, 1787, *ante*.

Could I have supposed, that the contents of a private letter (marked with evident haste) would have composed a newspaper paragraph, I certainly should have taken some pains to dress the Sentiments (to whom known is indifferent to me) in less exceptionable language, and would have assigned some reasons in support of my opinion, and the charges against others. I am persuaded your intentions were good, but I am not less persuaded, that you have provided food for strictures and criticisms be this however as it may, it shall pass off unnoticed by me, as I have no inclination and still less abilities for scribbling. With very great esteem and regard, I am &c.³⁴

To WILLIAM THOMPSON³⁵

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Mount Vernon, January 12, 1788.

Sir: I have recd. your letter of the 7th. inst. When I requested my nephew to apply to you for a craft, I expected that he would have engaged your largest, which he had last winter, upon the same terms that he then employed her viz: at £20 for the trip and allow

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

35. Of Colchester, Va.

her to be detained below for four days on his account if she exceeded that time by his desire, he was to give 20/ per day for every day she might be so detained over the four Stipulated.

My corn will be received about the place where your Vessel was last year. I shall have enough to employ your largest, two trips, which I had rather do than engage two Crafts. If you are willing to let me have the same Vessel which Majr. Washington had last winter, and upon the same terms above mentioned, I would thank you to drop me a line by the post. I am going from home to day and shall not return in less than 10 days. I should wish, if you agree to let me have the Vessel, that she might be ready to go down as soon as the frost and weather will permit. I am, etc.³⁶

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To DAVID STUART

Mount Vernon, January 15, 1788.

Dear Sir: In answer to your enquiries in behalf of Mr. Custis and which you requested I would commit to writing, you will please to receive and convey, the following information.

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Namely. That the lands which I have to dispose of beyond the Alligany mountains, are contained in the following tracts.

2314. Acres in Bottetourt County on the Ohio, beginning about 4 miles below the mouth of the little Kanhawa and bounded by the Ohio 1720 poles; being the first large bottom on the East side of that River, below the mouth of the little Kanhawa.

2448. Acres in the same rout and on the said river about 16 miles below the above tract being the 4th. large bottom on the east side, below the little Kanhawa; this tract is bounded by the Ohio 1012 poles, has a fine Creek running through it on which (as I am informed) are Mill seats.

4395. Acres, in the same County and on the Ohio also about 3 Miles below the last mentioned tract and on the same, that is the East side and above the great bend which is about 25 Miles

from the mouth of the Great Kanhawa bounded by the River 1670 poles.

In all, 9,157 Acres, on the Ohio, betwn. the great and little Kanhawa.

10,990 Acres, on the Great Kanhawa, West side of it in Montgomery County. Beginning about 2 or 3 Miles from its Conflux with the Ohio. Bounded by the former, that is the Kanhaw, 5491 poles, or 17 Miles and 51 poles. Having many valuable streams passing through it.

7276 Acres, about 2 Miles above the latter on the other or East side of the said river in Green brier County and bounded thereby 3947 poles or 12½ Miles.

2000 Acres about 6 Miles above the last mentioned tract on the west side of River laying in the fork of the Kanhawa and Coal River; bounded on the first 1400 and on the latter 588 poles.

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2950. Acres on the east side of the Kanhawa in Green brier County part whereof its opposite to the last mentioned tract. this is bounded by the River 1939 poles.

In all 23,216 Acres on the Great Kanhawa. and

9,157 on the Ohio

Total 32,373 on both Rivers.

That these several tracts, *some* from my own observation, and *all* from good information, are of the richest low grounds; being the first choice of the Country, by a competent Judge and are well

watered, and superabounding in fine meadow.

That the whole are to be let, on the Conditions hereafter mentioned.

That the two first mentioned on the Ohio, and the two last named on the Kanhawa may be purchased, as indeed all of them may if any one person for himself or in behalf of a number, will strike for the whole. without this and not because they are of inferior quality, but because what remains will be more concentered I incline to sell those that are farthest apart first.

That if I sell these, I shall expect (considering the quality of the Soil there situations on navigable waters; and the advantages they possess on account of Fish, wild fowl &c.) Twenty Shillings pt. Acre. part of the monies to be paid down, and such credit as can be agreed upon, given for the residue, I have been in treaty with some foreigners (thro' their agent Mr. Charson) who have large tracts of land back of or in the vicinity of some of these Lands of mine and who know them perfectly well, for the *whole* of them at the price of 30,000 guineas, but as they are not yet returned from Europe and the time is elapsed in which they were to have given me a definitive answer, I do not consider myself bound

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any longer to them, tho' it has been the cause (in a great measure) of the lands remaining unsold.

That the enclosed Gazette will explain my ideas of what I conceive the Rents *ought* to be. but this, it seems, is not the mode which is practiced by, and most agreeable to, the people in that Country, possibly from the scarcity of money, or want [*sic*] hitherto must conform to the custom of it and of established markets. I have accordingly within the course of the last month authorized Colo. Thomas Lewis who lives at Point Pleasant (a town at the mouth of the Great Kanhawa in which I am told 30 or 40 families are settled) and which is in the center, between my several tracts to let them on the following terms. that is to say.

First. With an exemption from the payment of rent 3 years. provided in that time a reasonable quantity of land is cleared and cultivated; a comfortable House, or houses for the accomodation of a family is built and a reasonable number of fruit trees planted. And provided also (if it be customary) that the Land tax of whatever the tenant may be inclined to hold is paid by them.

Second. That after the expiration of the third year Rents shall commence and, as the custom of the Country, is to be received in the specific articles that are raised on the tenement and in the proportion of one third, by

my Collector, or agent living near the premises.

Third. That under this tenure the tenant may have a certainty of holding their places (if they incline to remain and will continue to improve them) for a certain number of years (but not for lives) which may be agreed on.

Fourth. That all mines and minerals; with free egress and regress, shall be reserved. and an extra allowance made for Mill Seats, or a reservation of them if there is not.

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Altho', in the hands of Industrious tenants, and a good and faithful Collector, Rents paid in this manner and proportion, would far exceed what I have required in my printed proposals, yet I must confess that it is not a pleasing thing to me to let them on these terms because there is no certainty in the revenue which will arise from it. Idle tenants will pay little, dishonest ones will cheat me, and an indolent, or speculating Collector, will make poor returns. Otherwise as I have already observed no money rents that can be fixed would be so productive, for Instance: Suppose a farm of 100 acres (which of such land is enough for any man who has only a wife and their children to assist him) and ten only of these for the land is most easily cleared, is in cultivation, Corn we will say at the expiration of the 3d. year; this it is agreed *on all hands* , will yeild from 60 to 100 Bushels to the acre, but call it 50 only, it makes 500 Bushels the # of which is 166 bushels, the demand for which in a Country whose population is encreasing every year by thousands of emigrants will hardly ever let this article be under a Shilling; but was

it more than *half* , which is scarcely within the bounds of possibility, it would amount to £4.3 pr. Hundred Acres.

If Mr. Custis, or his neighbours of whom you made mention to me has any inclination to buy or rent any of my Lands here described, It would not be improper to suggest to them that the sooner something is resolved on the better; for as well formerly as lately, it has been told me, that I may soon fill my lands, with tenants agreeably to the terms on which Colo. Lewis has been empowered to grant them; and on which if nothing more pleasing to *both* parties can be agreed, Mr. Custis's neighbours may have them.

Should these circumstances, and conditions on which I have offered to sell part or Rent the whole of these lands induce Mr. Custis to take a trip by water, or land, to this place, I will shew him the plats of the several tracts, the manner in which the land lays, give him a more ample description of the advantages which attends it and if any terms can be agreed upon between us will endeavour in time to prevent the seating of them by Colo. Lewis, by

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whose agreements I must be bound, if he makes any, as I have given him full powers to let the Land. I am, etc.³⁷

37. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SAMUEL POWEL

Mount Vernon, January 18, 1788.

Dear Sir: Having nothing either interesting or entertaining in this quarter to communicate, our faces being turned to the Eastward for news I felt no inclination to give you the trouble of perusing a dull scrawl merely to acknowledge the rect. of your obliging favor of the 12th. Ulto and to thank you for the information it conveyed. hoping that in a little time something might occur more worthy of your attention but herein I am disappointed.

It is with pleasure I find that the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware have adopted the proposed Constitution for a foederal Government: the two latter unanimously and the former by so large a majority. Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire come next, in the order they are mentioned and will I hope with a decision equal to those which have preceeded them give their voices in favor of it. Of Maryland there can be little doubt and tho the Constitution in this State has powerful adversaries little doubt of its adoption has a place in my mind, but in this I may be mistaken. for as I never go from home and see few besides travellers, my conjectures may be founded in error. North Carolina has, it seems, postponed the meeting of its Convention to a later period than that of Virginia which it indicates I conceive of a disposition to take the tone from hence from the States South of it, I have no information that can be relied on, except that Georgia in appointing

a Convention, have accompanied the act with powers to alter or amend the Foederal Constitution; but if a weak State with the Indians on its back and the Spaniards on its flank

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does not see the necessity of a General Government there must I think be wickedness or insanity in the way.

The unanimity, and generosity, with which the County of Philadelphia has been offered for the Seat of the Fœderal government by the landholders thereof, gives much weight and merit to the invitation and will probably be an inducement to others to follow the example.

I offer my best wishes and affectionate Compliments to Mrs. Powell and assurance to you of the esteem etc.³⁸

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CHARLES CARTER

Mount Vernon, January 20, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 21st. of last month, came to my hands last night *only*; where it has been resting, or through whose hands it has passed, I know not. I wish it had reached me in time for the prevention of the hasty and indigested sentiments of my former letter, going to the press. not, as I observed in my last, because I had the least repugnance to the communication of them in a proper dress accompanied with reasons for their support if any person whatever was desirous of knowing them.

You give me some reason to hope for the result of your *thoughts*, or *experiments*, on a more eligable system of agriculture. To receive it would afford me pleasure. That the one which is now in general practice (if it can be called a system) is beyond description ruinous to our lands, need no other proof of the fact than the gullied, and exhausted state of them, which is every where to be met with; but what chance is most likely to restore the land with such means as is in our power to apply which will at the sametime be productive to the Proprietor, is the question, and an important one. a question too which admits of no other satisfactory solution than such as is derived from a *course* of experiments by

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intelligent and observant farmers, who will combine things and circumstances together. Theoretical opinions should have no share in the determination and what is good, and profitable husbandry in one Country, may not

be so in another. Articles which are very saleable in Europe might find no market in America and if produced abundantly would answer no other end than to encumber our Barns, or Graneries. Consequently two things must be engrafted into our plan: 1st. Crops which are useful on our farms, or saleable in our markets, and 2d. the intermixing these crops by such relations and with such dressings as will improve, instead of exhausting of our lands. To effect these is the great desiderata of Farming, and ought to be the pursuit of every farmer. on this ground every experiment is a treasure, and the authors of them valuable members of Society. Hence also the Societies which are formed for the encouragement, and promulgation, of these experiments in other Country's have rendered such essential services to the improved and improving States of agriculture in the old world and are so worthy of imitation in the new.

My best respects, in which Mrs. Washington joins, is offered to Mrs. Carter and your family I am, etc.⁴¹

41. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, January 20, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your goodness upon a former occasion accompanied with assurances of forwarding any despatches I might have for Europe in future is the cause of my troubling you with the letters herewith enclosed. The one for the Marquis de la Fayette contains vocabularies of the Delaware and Shawanese languages for the Empress of Russia. I beg leave, therefore, to recommend it to your particular care. To send it by Post from Havre,

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I am informed, would be expensive. To trust it to chance might be still worse. I leave it to your judgment, therefore, to convey it in such a manner as you shall think best.

We are locked fast in frost; expecting as soon as the weather breaks to hear what the Conventions of Connecticut and Massachusetts have resolved on, with respect to the Government which is submitted to them. The determinations of your State on this important subject seem more problematical than any other; yet, little doubt remains in my mind of the adoption of it in Virginia. I may be mistaken, for going seldom from home and seeing few besides travellers, my information may be defective. North Carolina we are told has fixed a late period for the meeting of its Convention; hence (it is not unfair to infer) they mean to take the tone from this State.

I have heard with much concern that both Mrs Jay and yourself have been indisposed.

I hope you are now perfectly restored, the best wishes and most affecte. regards of Mrs. Washington and myself are presented, and I am &c.42

To CHARLES CARTER

Mount Vernon, January 22, 1788.

Dear Sir: I return the letters which you were so obliging as to forward to me under cover of the 17th. I am satisfied you had not agency in publishing the extract of my letter to you which is now to be traced through all the news Papers, and am sorry that I signified any concern on this occasion, as it has given you so much trouble.

With very great esteem and regard I am, etc.42

42. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES KEITH

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Mount Vernon, January 24, 1788.

Sir: The friends of Miss Anderson;⁴⁴ and the residuary legatees named, or described in the will of the deceased Colo. Thomas Colvill are frequently applying to me; the first for the legacy which is bequeathed to that Lady, the others (but more particularly one who claims under the name of Short) to know what the residue of that Estate is.

No man can be more anxious to have all these matters finally settled upon equitable and legal ground than I am, and so far as my agency in the Administration of that Estate has gone there can be no difficulty in closing the Accts., and at any moment to satisfy the claims of every one, if there is no interference by the laws which passed during the Revolution and may be in force. In a word to do everything which I can do with safety.

Let me entreat therefore, Sir, that you would inform me.

1st. What progress you have made in the statement of these Accts.

2d. Whether any more papers for the better illustration of them have been handed to you by Mr. Thomas West (Son of Mr Jno. West)? By the Revd. Mr. William West: or by any others who have been applied to by me for this purpose?

3d. Whether you have yourself obtained any lights with respect to the Bills of Exchange which

44. Miss Harriet Rebecca Anderson.

are unaccounted for, and which I have reason to believe were applied by Mr John West in discharge of a protested bill due to Mr Thomas Kirkpatrick?

4th. What, if any, are the impediments which oppose a final settlement with the Court?

5th. Whether there is any prospect of overcoming them *satisfactorily* ?

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6th. What steps, if there is no further expectation of aid from the papers of Mr. John West, ought to be taken to close them? and

7th. What measure necessary for me to adopt for my safety and Justification under such circumstances?

It will never, I fear, be more in my power to make Mr. West's Estate answerable for neglects, or misapplications (if any there be) in his administration than at present; this then is among other important reasons which makes me extremely anxious to bring this business to a close. I therefore pray that you will favor me with answers, as soon as it is convenient, to the foregoing questions, and if there is no further hope (which I am fully persuaded is the case) of aid from the heirs and Executors of Mr. John West that the Accts. maybe made up in the clearest and best manner the nature of the case will admit, and that you will be so good as to accompany them with your advice in writing in what manner I shall proceed.

1st. I submitting to the Court.

2d. In case it should appear, as has already been mentioned, that the transactions of Mr. West cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, and a consequent delinquency, what in that case is incumbent on me to do?

3d. Whether the legacy due to Miss Anderson may safely be paid? whether it ought to bear interest? and in that case, from what period?

4th. In case a surplus should be found after all the debts and legacies are paid, what mode will be best for me to adopt, and safest, in the disposal of it; so as not to defeat the Testators intentions, nor to draw myself into a scrape from the variety of claims which have been presented; some of which are now in the hands of Mr. Remney⁴⁵ of Alexandria.

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And lastly I wish to know what debts, by the papers in your hands, appear to be due *to* and *from* the Estate, and what measures I had best take to obtain the former, especially in the case of the Bond from Mr. Montgomerie⁴⁶ and others. In the close investigation of this business, other matters, not herein enumerated, may occur on which your advice may be equally necessary and for which I shall be not less obliged. I am, etc.⁴⁷

45. John Rumney.

46. Robert Montgomerie.

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, January 24, 1788.

Dear Sir: I wrote to you on the 3d. Ult. and as I have not received any answer to my letter of that date, I am led to suspect that it never reached your hands; I therefore enclose you a duplicate of it.

My reason for requesting you to pay Mr Pettit £18.5.1 (as mentioned in the enclosed duplicate) when I was not certain of your having money of mine in your hands to that amount, was in consequence of his informing me, in his letter, that you had offered to discharge it at the time the Backs and Jambs were shipped, but he then declined accepting it, not knowing how far it might comport with my arrangements to do; and I likewise expected that a sum of money would, very shortly after my writing to you, have been lodged in your hands, on my account, by Thomas Smith Esqr. If you have not paid the money to Mr. Pettit and should find the smallest inconvenience in so doing I wish you to inform me of it that I may convey it to him through some other channel.

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I will thank you to forward the enclosed letter to General Butler by the first safe and direct conveyance, and am etc.⁴⁸

[H.S.P.]

48. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

To JOHN RUMNEY

Mount Vernon, January 24, 1788.

Sir: In answer to your letter of the 22^o. I can only, in addition to what I have formerly written to you on the subject of the claims on the surplus (if any) of the estate of the deceased Cold. Thomas Covill, say, that I, who in fact had very little to do in the administration of that Estate *previous* to the despute with Great Britain, and nothing during the continuation of it for the nine or ten years that I was absent, have done every thing in my power, since my return home, to bring the accts. to a close in some manner or another. To this end I have called upon the Son and Heir of Mr. John West (deceased) who was the principal acting Executor of Cold. Colvill, upon the Revd. Mr. West and Cold. George West his Brothers, the former of whom is, and the latter was (before his death) the Executors of John West. and upon Major Little, the Agent of Lord Tankerville, for all the papers and information that can throw lights on these accts. and such as I have been able to obtain; imperfect indeed they are! are placed in the hands of a Gentleman of the Law, well acquainted with this kind of business to make a proper digest and arrangement of them, which, when accomplished, will be exhibited to the Court. and then, as I mentioned in a former letter, whatever is right and proper for me to do under the will agreeable to Law, I shall do with out delay, or hesitation.

It must seem strange to persons not acquainted with the Circumstances, that a

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matter of this sort should lye in an unfinished state so long. The truth of the case is, that Cold. Thomas Colvill's affairs were so blended with his brother John Colvill (to whom he was sole Executor and a Legatee), and these again so entangled with debts, to the Tankerville family, also with an important sale of land made by Thomas Colvill, as Executor of John Colvill, to John Semple which involved disputes, references &c. and moreover with Law-suits in other cases, all of which together, with more exertion than I believe fell to the lott of Mr. West, could not have brought matters to a close before hostilities commenced; and the Courts of Justice were shut; after this, the death of Mr. West, and my absence (Mrs. Colvill the Executrix of the will being also dead) put an entire stop to this business; and since, the disordered state in which that Gentleman has left his papers, or rather no papers, has occasioned more trouble and vexation to me engrossed as my time is with a multitude of other matters than any private circumstance of my life has ever done to renew and bring this business if possible to a satisfactory issue. However, I am determined that the accounts and disputes shall be liquidated, and the best, or worst known without much more delay, for this purpose I have this day written to the Gentleman who is vested with all the Papers to have them adjusted upon the best ground he can take for the accomplishment of this work. I am, etc.⁴⁹

49. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, January 31, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 9th. Inst. came to hand last evening. As you know whatever concerns your happiness and welfare cannot be indifferent to me, you will very readily believe me when I assure you that I take a feeling part in your anxiety and distress on account of your son, and most sincerely wish for his recovery.

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I thank you, my dear Sir, for your observations upon the advantages, which might accrue from a settlement of the eastern parts of your State.⁵⁰ I am very sorry to find there is likely to be so powerful an opposition to the adoption of the proposed plan of Government with you; and I am entirely of your opinion that the business of the Convention should be conducted with moderation, candor and fairness which are not incompatible with firmness; for altho', as you justly observe, the friends of the new System may bear down the opposition, yet they would never be able, by precipitate or violent measures, to soothe and reconcile their minds to the exercise of the Government, which is a matter that ought as much as possible to be kept in view, and temper their proceedings.

What will be the fate of the Constitution in this State is impossible to tell, at a period so far distant from the meeting of the Convention; my private opinion of the matter however is, that it will certainly be adopted; there is however, no doubt but the decision of other

50. Now the State of Maine.

States will have great influence here particularly of one so respectable as Massachusetts. You have undoubtedly seen my sentiments upon the Constitution in an extract of a letter written by me to a Gentleman in Fredericksburg, which I find has circulated pretty generally through the papers; I had not the most distant idea of its ever appearing before the publick, for altho' I have not the least wish or desire to conceal my Sentiments upon the subject from any person living, yet, as the letter containing the paragraph alluded to was written upon several other matters quite foreign to this and intended only for that Gentleman's own inspection, I did not attend to the manner of expressing my ideas, or dress them in the language I should have done, if I had the smallest suspicion of there ever coming to the publick eye through that channel.

I feel myself much obliged by your promise to inform me of whatever transpires in your convention worthy of attention and assure you that it will be gratefully received. With the

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sincerest regard and the most ardent desire that your distress may be removed by the recovery of your Son, I am &c.51

51. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To ANDREW LEWIS

Mount Vernon, February 1, 1788.

Sir: The white Doe with which you have been pleased to present me, and which is indeed, a very great curiosity, came safe to hand, this day, for which and so obliging a mark of your attention and politeness I beg you to accept my best acknowledgments and thanks.

Doctr. Stuart informed me by letter from Richmond, that you had it in contemplation of offering me a Buffaloe calf, of which you were possessed; and desired to know if it would be acceptable. In answer, I assured him it would be very much so, as I had been endeavouring for sometime to get a pair (male and female with a view of propagating the breed for the draught)⁵² and requested him to inform you thereof; but it seems you had left Richmond before my letter which was enclosed in it for your Brother Colo. Thomas Lewis who I requested, and had accordingly empowered, to rent my Lands on the G. Kanhawa, and Ohio above it. This last was, I believe, sent by a Mr. Clendenia,⁵³ and I should be glad to know whether it got safe to hand, and whether the Colo. will act as my agent in that Country or not; with the letter was enclosed draughts of all these Lands.

Is it with you, or your Brother I hold the Burning spring and a small quantity of surrounding Land, in Partnership? What is, or can be done with it? Mr. Porter tells me you are expected at Alexa.

52. Draft.

53. George Clendinen, of Philadelphia, Pa.

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this spring: should you fulfil your intention of coming thither I can, without a compliment assure you that I shall have great pleasure in seeing you at this place for though I have not the honor of an intimate acquaintance with you I had such with your deceased Father for whom I had a very sincere friendship and regard. I am, etc.⁵⁴

To JOHN FOWLER

Mount Vernon, February 2, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of today, and in answer to it must inform you that I have no inclination to purchase the Negro fellow which you mention as I have already as many Slaves as I wish, and I cannot engage to give another, or others in exchange for him, because I do not think, it would be agreeable to their inclinations to leave their Connexions here, and it is inconsistent with my feelings to compel them. I did agree to take him from Mr. Robt. Alexander but it was in part payment of a debt which he owed me and upon any other consideration I would not receive him. I am, etc.⁵⁴

54. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BURWELL BASSETT

Mount Vernon, February 3, 1788.

Dear Sir: Mr. Dandridge for reasons which he can better explain to you than I, has requested that the enclosed Bonds may be put in Suit. I beg it may be done accordingly.

Upon so great a change as has lately taken place in your career of life I ought, possibly to have begun this letter with compliments of congratulation but as they are not less sincere on account of there being made the second Paragraph of the epistle you will please to accept and present them to your lady in the manner which will be most pleasing to you both. In doing which include your Aunts.

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It is unnecessary, I hope, for me to add that whenever, and at all times, that you and Mrs. Bassett can find inclination and leizure to visit your friends at Mount Vernon we shall be happy to see you at it. I am, etc.

P.S. Inform me by the first Post after this letter is received of its safe arrival that I may be relieved from any apprehension of its miscarriage.⁵⁵

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JONATHAN TRUMBULL

Mount Vernon, February 5, 1788.

My dear Sir: I thank you for your obliging favor of the 9th. Ult^o. which came duly to hand, and congratulate with you on the adoption of the new Constitution in your State by so decided a Majority and so many respectable Characters. I wish for the same good tidings from Massachusetts but the accts. from thence are not so favourable. The decision, it is even said, is problematical; arising, as I believe 9/10ths of the opposition does, from local circumstance and sinister views. The result of the deliberations in that State will have considerable influence on those which are to follow, especially in that of New York where I fancy the opposition to the form will be greatest.

Altho' an inhabitant of this State, I cannot speak with decision on the publick sentiment of it with respect to the proposed Constitution; my private opinion however of the matter is, that it will certainly be received but in this opinion I may be mistaken. I have not been ten miles from home since my return to it from Philadelphia; I see few who do not live within that circle, except Travellers and strangers and these form opinions upon too slight ground to be relied on. The opponents of the Constitution are indefatigable in fabricating and

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circulating papers, reports, &c. to its prejudice; whilst the friends *generally* content themselves with the goodness of the cause and the necessity for its adoption, supposing it wants no other support.

Mrs. Washington, and others of this family with whom you are acquainted (among which is Colo. Humphries) join me in every good wish for you, Mrs. Trumbull and family and with sentiments of the sincerest regard &c.56

***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, February 5, 1788.

My dear Sir: Soon after my last was dispatched to you, I was favoured with the receipt of your letter of the 14th. Ult; by which, and other accts. of more recent date, I am sorry to find that the important question under deliberation in Massachusetts, stands on such precarious ground. The decision of that State will, unquestionably, have considerable influence on those which are to follow; especially on the one in which you now are; at the sametime that an unfavourable issue, will strengthen the cords of dissention in others, which

56. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

have already decided.

What may be the final determination on this Subject in Virginia, is more, I believe, than any man can say with precision. Every one, with whom you converse, delivers his own sentiment as the sentiments of the State; whilst there is *no* just criterion that I know of, to form a decided judgment. My own opinion of the matter is, as I observed to you in my last, that it will certainly be received; but, for the reasons then assigned, I may be mistaken; not having been from home ten miles (my journey up the river being prevented by bad weather and a slight indisposition) since I returned from Philadelphia, and from not having seen

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many beyond that circle, except travellers and strangers, whose means of information is too often defective to be relied on.

The poor Patriots of Holland, must either have been greatly deceived, or they have acted from weakness and precipitency. The first, I conceive to be the case, and the peculiar situation of the affairs of France, perhaps too, divisions among themselves, will acct. for it. Be this as it may, their case is pitiable.

The Navigation of this river has been stopped for near five weeks. At this moment we are locked fast by Ice, and the air of this day is amongst the keenest I ever recollect to have felt.

Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for you and Mrs. Knox, and I am etc.

PS. Pray, if it is not a secret, who is the author, or authors of Publius?

[MS.H.S.]

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, February 5, 1788.

My dear Sir: I am indebted to you for several of your favors, and thank you for their enclosures. The rumours of War between France and England have subsided; and the poor Patriots of Holland, it seems, are left to fight their own Battles or negotiate, in neither case with any great prospect of advantage. They must have been deceived, or their conduct has been divided, precipitate, and weak. the former, with some blunders, have, I conceive, been the causes of their misfortunes.

I am sorry to find by yours, and other accts. from Massachusetts, that the decision of its Convention (at the time of their dates) remains problematical.⁵⁸ A rejection of the New form by that State will invigorate the opposition, not only in New York, but in all those

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which are to follow; at the same time that it will afford materials for the Minority in such as have adopted it, to blow

58. Madison had written (January 22): "The intelligence from Massachusetts begins to be very ominous to the Constitution. The antifederal party is reinforced by the insurgents, and by the province of Mayne, which apprehends greater obstacles to her scheme of a separate Government, from the new system than may be otherwise experienced. And according to the prospect at the date of the latest letters, there was very great reason to fear, that the voice of that State would be in the negative. The operation of such an event on this State may easily be foreseen...The decision of Massachusetts either way will involve the result in this State. The minority in Penna. is very restless under their defeat. If they can get an Assembly to their wish they will endeavor to undermine what has been done there. If backed by Massts. they will probably be emboldened to make some more rash experiment. The information from Georgia continues to be favorable. The little we get from S. Carolina is of the same complexion." Madison's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

the Trumpet of discord more loudly. The acceptance by a *bare* majority, tho' preferable to a rejection, is also to be deprecated. It is scarcely possible to form any decided opinion of the general sentiment of the people of this State, on this important subject. Many have asked me with anxious solicitude, if you did not mean to get into the Convention, conceiving it of indispensable necessity. Colo Mason, who returned only yesterday, has offered himself, I am told for the County of Stafford; and his friends add, he can be elected not only there, but for Prince William and Fauquier also. The truth of this I know not. I rarely go from home, and my visitors, who, for the most part are travellers and strangers, have not the best information.

At the time you suggested for my consideration, the expediency of a communication of my sentiments on the proposed Constitution, to any correspondent I might have in Massachusetts, it did not occur to me that Genl Lincoln and myself frequently interchanged letters; much less did I expect, that a hasty, and indigested extract of one which I had

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written, inter-mixed with a variety of other matter to Colo Chas Carter, in answer to a letter I had received from him respecting Wolf dogs, Wolves,

Sheep, experiments in Farming &c &c &c.59 was then in the press, and would bring these sentiments to public view by means of the extensive circulation I find that extract has had. Altho' I never have concealed, and am perfectly regardless who becomes acquainted with my sentiments on the proposed Constitution, yet nevertheless, as no care had been taken to dress the ideas, or any reasons assigned in support of my opinion, I feel myself hurt by the publication; and informed my friend the Colonel of it. In answer, he has fully exculpated himself of the *intention* , but his zeal in the cause prompted him to distribute copies, under a prohibition (which was disregarded) that they should not go to the press. As you have seen the rude, or crude extract (as you may please to term it) I will add no more on the subject.

Perceiving that the Fœderalist, under the signature of Publius, is about to be republished, I would thank you for forwarding to me three or four Copies, one of which to be neatly bound, and inform me of the cost. Altho' we have not had many, or deep Snows yet we have since the commencement of them, had a very severe Winter; and if the cold of this day is proportionately keen with you a warm room, and a good fire will be found no bad, or uncomfortable antidote to it. With sentiments of perfect esteem etc.60

59. The "Letter Book" reads at this point: "Wolves wolf-dogs Sheep, and the lord knows what else.

60. The text is from that printed in the sales catalogue of the *Washington-Madison Papers* (McGuire Collection, 1892).

To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE

Mount Vernon, February 7, 1788.

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Sir: The Comte de Moustier your successor in office hath forwarded from New York, the letter in which you did me the honour to bring me acquainted with the merits of that Nobleman. Since it is the misfortune of America not to be favored any longer with your residence, it was necessary, to diminish our regrets, that so worthy and respectable a character should be appointed your successor. I shall certainly be happy in cultivating his acquaintance and friendship. The citizens, from gratitude as well as from personal considerations, will, I am persuaded, treat him with the greatest respect. Congress, I doubt not, will by every means in their power desire to make his sojourn in the United States as agreeable as it possibly can be.

But, Sir, you may rest assured your abilities and dispositions to serve this Country were so well understood, and your services so properly appreciated, that the residence of no public Minister will ever be longer remembered or his absence more sincerely regretted. It will not be forgotten that you were a witness to the dangers, the sufferings, the exertions and the successes of the

United States from the most perilous crises to the hour of triumph. The influence of your agency on the Cabinet to produce a co-operation and the prowess of your Countrymen co-operating with ours in the field to secure the liberties of America have made such an indelible impression on the public mind as will never be effaced. Wherever you may be, our best wishes will follow you. And such is our confidence in your disinterested friendship, that we are certain you will wish to be useful to us, in whatever Mission you may be honored by your King: it has been surmised, on I know not what authority, that there was a probability of your being employed in the Diplomatic Corps at the Court of London; should this be the case, your zeal may still find occasions of being servicable to America, and profitable to your own Country at the same time; for I conceive the commercial interests of the two nations are in many instances blended, and in opposition to those of great Britain.

By intelligence of a more recent date than that brought by the Comte de Moustier, we learn that the political clouds which threatened to burst in a storm on France and England

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are blown over. The poor Dutch Patriots, however, seem to have had the objects for which
61 off (if I may use the same metaphor) by a corner of the hurricane. The Dutch Patriots,
I fear have been disunited, imprudent, impetuous: and that the King of Prussia has not
acted worthily or wisely; should his measures drive the Courts of Versailles and Vienna
into an union of plans; should the embers of war be but

61. Left blank in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

imperfectly quenched, he may yet repent the timidity of intermeddling with the internal
affairs of a foreign Power. In the meantime the new scene that is opened in the north, by
the rupture between the Russians and Turks must call men's attention to that quarter, as
it can hardly avoid producing events, which will be attended with serious, extensive, and
desirable consequences.

I feel, Sir, not only for myself, but in behalf of my Country, under great obligations for the
affectionate wishes you have the goodness to make with respect to the tranquillity and
happiness of America. Separated as we are by a world of water from other Nations, if we
are wise we shall surely avoid being drawn into the labyrinth of their politics and involved
in their destructive wars.

You will doubtless have seen long before this time, the Constitution which was proposed
by the Fœderal Convention for the United States. Only four States as yet (to my
knowledge) have had an opportunity of acting upon it. The Pennsylvania State Convention
adopted it by a Majority of two to one, those of Jersey and Delaware Unanimously, and
that of Connecticut by more than three to one. In Massachusetts the Convention is now
in session. The Merits of this Constitution have been discussed in a great variety of news
paper

and other Publications. A periodical Essay in the New York Gazettes, under Title of the
Federalist, has advocated it with great ability. In short it seems (so far as I have been able
to learn) to be a prevalent opinion, that it will have been accepted by nine States or more

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early in the ensuing summer. With sentiments of great respect and consideration, I have the honor &c.62

To ELÉONOR FRANÇOIS ÉLIE, COMTE DE MOUSTIER63

Mount Vernon, February 7, 1788.

Sir: I have received the letter which your Excellency did me the honor to address to me on the 24th of January, and take the earliest occasion of expressing my warmest acknowledgments for your favourable opinion as well as offering my sincerest congratulations on your safe arrival in this country. I am at the same time to return you my thanks for the trouble you had the goodness to take in conveying to me the letters of my noble friends the Marquis de la Fayette and the Chevr. de la Luzerne, indeed nothing was wanting to the pleasure afforded by their communications, but that of having received them at your hands and thereby having had an opportunity of demonstrating the promptitude of my attention to

62. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

63. Minister from France to the United States.

their recommendations. In the mean time I have taken the liberty (which I beg your Excellency to excuse) of remitting my answers for them to your care.

The fidelity, honour and bravery of the troops of your nation, to which I have been a witness; the enlightened sentiments of patriotism and the delicate feelings of friendship which have actuated great numbers of your compatriots, with whom I may boast the happiness of being intimately connected; and above all that lively interest which your illustrious Monarch and his faithful subjects took in the success of the American Arms and the confirmation of our Independence have endeared the National Character to me, and formed attachments and left impressions which no distance in time or contingency in event

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can possibly remove. Though but a private citizen myself and in a measure secluded from the world, I am conscious the assertion will be [well] founded, while I venture to affirm that such are the feelings and such the affections of the American People.

Deprived of the felicity of having been able to form a personal acquaintance with your Excellency, by your arrival at a distance: it is mine peculiarly to regret that misfortune and earnestly to wish some favorable circumstance may hasten the moment so desirable to me. And I pray you

will be persuaded that I should be truly happy to receive you, in the plain unceremonious American style, on the banks of the Potomack. The partial knowledge of your merits which had preceded your advent and the very honorable testimonials of our friends in France, added to the advantage you possess in being the Representative of a Sovereign, (the earliest, most faithful and most powerful Ally of these infant States) cannot fail to make your presence extremely agreeable to Congress and the American People. Permit me to add the assurance, Sir, that your Mission cannot be more acceptable, to, or your friendship more flattering to any American, than to him who has the honour to subscribe himself, Sir Yr. Excellency's &.64

64.From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, February 7, 1788.

My dear Marqs: You know it always gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear from you, and therefore I need only say that your two kind letters of the 9th and 15th of Octr. so replete with personal affection and confidential intelligence, afforded me inexpressible satisfaction. I shall myself be happy in forming an acquaintance and cultivating a friendship with the new Minister Plenipotentiary of France, whom you have commended as a "sensible and honest man;" these are qualities too rare and too precious not to merit one's

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particular esteem. You may be persuaded, that he will be well received by the Congress of the United States, because they will not only be influenced in their conduct by his individual merits, but also by their affection for the nation of whose Sovereign he is the Representative. For it is an undoubted fact, that the People of America entertain a grateful remembrance of past services as well as a favourable disposition for commercial and friendly connections with your Nation.

You appear to be, as might be expected from a real friend to this Country, anxiously concerned about its present political situation. So far as I am able I shall be happy in gratifying that friendly solicitude.

As to my sentiments with respect to the merits of the new Constitution, I will disclose them without reserve, (although by passing through the Post offices they should become known to all the world) for, in truth, I have nothing to conceal on that subject. It appears to me, then, little short of a miracle, that the Delegates from so many different States (which States you know are also different from each other in their manners, circumstances and prejudices) should unite in forming a system of national Government, so little liable to well founded objections. Nor am I yet such an enthusiastic, partial or indiscriminating admirer of it, as not to perceive it is tinctured with some real (though not radical) defects. The limits of a letter would not suffer me to go fully into an examination of them; nor would the discussion be entertaining or profitable, I therefore forbear to touch upon it. With regard to the two great points (the pivots upon which the whole machine must move,) my Creed is simply,

1st. That the general Government is not invested with more Powers than are indispensably necessary to perform the functions of a good Government; and, consequently, that no objection ought to be made against the quantity of Power delegated to it.

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2ly. That these Powers (as the appointment of all Rulers will for ever arise from, and, at short stated intervals, recur to the free suffrage of the People) are so distributed among the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches, into which the general Government is arranged, that it can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, an Oligarchy, an Aristocracy, or any other despotic or oppressive form, so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the People.

I would not be understood my dear Marquis to speak of consequences which may be produced, in the revolution of ages, by corruption of morals, profligacy of manners, and listlessness for the preservation of the natural and unalienable rights of mankind; nor of the successful usurpations that may be established at such an unpropitious juncture, upon the ruins of liberty, however providently guarded and secured, as these are contingencies against which no human prudence can effectually provide. It will at least be a recommendation to the proposed Constitution that it is provided with more checks and barriers against the introduction of Tyranny, and those of a nature less liable to be surmounted, than any Government hitherto instituted among mortals, hath possessed. We are not to expect perfection in this world; but mankind, in modern times, have apparently made some progress in the science of government. Should that which is now offered to the People of America, be found on experiment less perfect than it can be made, a Constitutional door is left open for its amelioration.

Some respectable characters have wished, that the States, after having pointed out whatever

alterations and amendments may be judged necessary, would appoint another federal Convention to modify it upon those documents. For myself I have wondered that sensible men should not see the impracticability of the scheme. The members would go fortified with such Instructions that nothing but discordant ideas could prevail. Had I but slightly suspected (at the time when the late Convention was in session) that another convention

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would not be likely to agree upon a better form of Government, I should now be confirmed in the fixed belief that they would not be able to agree upon any System whatever. So many, I may add, such contradictory, and, in my opinion unfounded objections have been urged against the System in contemplation; many of which would operate equally against every efficient Government that might be proposed. I will only add, as a further opinion founded on the maturest deliberation, that there is no alternative, no hope of alteration, no intermediate resting place, between the adoption of this, and a recurrence to an unqualified state of Anarchy, with all its deplorable consequences.

Since I had the pleasure of writing to you last, no material alteration in the political state of affairs has taken place to change the prospect of the Constitution's being adopted by nine States or more, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Connecticut have already done it. It is also said Georgia has acceded. Massachusetts, which is perhaps thought to be rather more doubtful than when I last addressed you, is now in convention.

A spirit of emigration to the

western Country is very predominant. Congress have sold, in the year past, a pretty large quantity of lands on the Ohio, for public Securities, and thereby diminished the domestic debt considerably. Many of your military acquaintances such as the Generals Parsons, Varnum, and Putnam, the Colos. Tupper, Sprout and Sherman, with many more, propose settling there. From such beginnings much may be expected.

The storm of war between England and your Nation, it seems, is dissipated. I hope and trust the political affairs in France are taking a favorable turn. If the Ottomans woud. suffer themselves to be precipitated into a war, they must abide the consequences. Some Politicians speculate on a triple Alliance between the two Imperial Courts and Versailles. I think it was rather fortunate, than otherwise, that the incaution of Ambassador and the rascality of a Rhinegrave prevented you from attempting to prop a falling fabric.

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It gives me great pleasure to learn that the present ministry of France are friendly to America; and that Mr. Jefferson and yourself have a prospect of accomplishing measures which will mutually benefit and improve the commercial intercourse between the two Nations. Every good wish attend you and yrs. I am, &c.65

65. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, February 11, 1788.

My dear Sir: As you must be convinced that whatever affects your happiness or welfare cannot be indifferent to me I need not tell you, that I was most sensibly affected by your letter of the 20th of January. Yes, my dear Sir, I sincerely condole with you the loss of a worthy, amiable, and valuable Son! Altho' I had not the happiness of a personal acquaintance with him, yet the character which he sustained, and his near connexion with you, are, to me, sufficient reasons, to lament his death. It is unnecessary for me to offer any consolation on the present occasion; for to a mind like yours it can only be drawn from that source which never fails to give a bountiful supply to those who reflect justly. Time *alone* can blunt the keen edge of afflictions; Philosophy and our Religion holds out to us such hopes as will, upon proper reflection, enable us to bear with fortitude the most calamitous incidents of life and these are all that can be expected from the feelings of humanity; is all which they will yield.

I thank you my dear Sir, for the information which you forwarded me of the proceedings of your Convention. It is unhappy that a matter of such high importance cannot be discussed with that candour and moderation which would throw light on the subject and place its merits in a proper point of view; but in an assembly so large as your

Convention must be and composed of such various and opposite characters, it is almost impossible but that some things will occur which would rouse the passions of the

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most moderate man on earth. It is however, to be hoped that your final decision will be agreeable to the wishes of good men and favourable to the Constitution. Mrs. Washington thanks you for your kind remembrance of her and joins me in the sincerest condolence for your loss. With sentiments of the highest esteem &c.66

To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD

Mount Vernon, February 13, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 20th. Ult, accompanied by a bag of Seeds, did not get to my hands untill the middle of last week or it should have received an earlier acknowledgment; as you now do my thanks for the latter.

I feel myself obliged by the measures you have pursued to stock me with

66. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Turnip seed; but if I am *tolerably* lucky, I shall raise a sufficiency from seed sent me by Arthur Young Esqr.; many hundreds of the Turnips being set out for that purpose: injudiciously tho' I fear, as they will be exposed to Poultry, especially Turkeys, a circumstance that did not occur to me when I made choice of the spot (in other respects favourable) for the transplantation of them. I am not less obliged to you for the offer of spring Wheat; but a little of this also I got from England, from the same Gentleman, Mr. Young, together with winter Vetch, Sainfoin and other seeds. But from neglect too common among Master's of Vessels (of stowing them in the hold) I fear vegetation in most of them is injured, if not entirely destroyed. This was the case *nearly* with a little wheat, the Sainfoin and some other seeds which were imported and sown last Autumn. With care and attention however I may, possibly raise a little from each in which case I shall be very ready to oblige you in my turn. Exchanges, and Services of this kind, are what Farmers owe to one another; and in the practice of which I should feel much pleasure.

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I think with you that the life of a Husbandman of all others is the most delectable. It is honorable. It is amusing, and, with judicious management, it is profitable. To see plants rise from the Earth and flourish by the superior skill, and bounty of the laborer fills a contemplative mind with ideas which are more easy to be conceived than expressed.

I am glad to find that your

first essay to raise Indian Corn in drills has succeeded as much to your satisfaction; but I am inclined to think, unless restoratives were more abundant than they are to be found on Common farms, that 6 feet by 2 will be too oppressive to your land. Experience has proved that every soil will sink under the growth of this plant; whether from the luxuriancy and exhausting quality of it, or the manner of tillage or from both, is not *very* certain, because instead of 2420 plants which stand on an Acre at six feet square, with two stalks in a hill (as is usual in land of middling quality,) you have 3630 at 6 feet by 2, single stalks. How far the exposing of land to the rays of the Sun in Summer is injurious, is a question yet more difficult to solve than the other. My own opinion of the matter is, that it does; but this controverts the practice of Summer fallows, which (especially in heavy land) some of the best practical Farmers in England contend for as indispensably necessary notwithstanding the doctrine of Mr. Young, and many others who are opposed to them.

The reason, however, which induced me to give my Corn rows the wide distance of ten feet, was not because I thought it essential to the growth of that *plant*, but because I introduced other plants between them. And this practice, from the experience of two years, one the wettest, and the

other the driest that ever was felt on my Estate, I am resolved to continue untill the inutility of it, or something more advantageous, shall point out the expediency of a change; but I mean to practise it with variations, fixing on 8 by 2 feet as the medium, or standing distance which will give more plants by 300 to the acre, than six feet each way with two stalks in a hill will do.

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As all my Corn will be thus drilled, so between all, I mean to put in, drills also, Potatoes, Carrots (as far as my seed will go) and Turnips alternately; that not one sort, more than another, may have the advantage of Soil; thereby to ascertain the comparative quantity, and value of each of these plants as food for horses and stock of every kind. From the trials I have made (under the disadvantages already mentioned) I am well satisfied that my crop of Corn in this way, will equal the yield of the same fields in the usual mode of cultivation, and that the quantity of Potatoes (proportionate to the number of Rows) will quadruple the Corn. I entertain the same opinion with respect to Carrots, but being more unlucky in the latter, I cannot speak with so much confidence, and still less can I do it with respect to Turnips.

From this husbandry, and statement then of what I conceive to be facts, any given number of acres will yield as much Corn in the *new* as they will in the *old* way, and will, moreover, with *little* or *no* extra labour produce four times as many Potatoes or Carrots, which adds considerably to the profit from the field but here it may be asked if the land

will sustain these Crops, or rather the Potatoes in addition to the Corn. This is a question my own experience does not enable me to answer. The received opinion of many practical Farmers in England is, that Potatoes and Carrots are ameliorators, not exhausters of the Soil; preparing it well for other Crops. But I do not scruple to confess, that notwithstanding the profit which appears to result from the growth of Corn and Potatoes, or Corn and Carrots, or both, thus blended, my wish is to exclude Indian Corn altogether from my system of Cropping, but we are so habituated to the use of this grain, and it is so much better for negroes than any other, that it is not to be discarded; consequently to introduce it in the most profitable, or least injurious manner, ought to be the next consideration with the Farmer.

To do this, some are of opinion that a small spot, set apart *solely* for the purpose, and kept highly manured, is the best method. And an instance in proof, is adduced of a gentleman near Baltimore, who for many years past from the same ground has not made less than

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ten Barrels to the Acre in Drills, 6 feet apart, and (if I recollect rightly) 18 Inches in the rows. But quæry, where the Farmer has no other resource than the manure of his own Farm, will not his other crops be starved by this extra allowance to the Indian

Corn? I am inclined to think it will; and for that reason I shall try the intermixture of Potatoes, Carrots and Turnips, or either (as from practice shall be found most profitable) with my Corn, which shall become a component part of some regular, and systematic plan best adapted to the nature of my soil.

To Societies which have been formed for the encouragement of agriculture, is the perfection to which husbandry is now arrived in England indebted. Why then does not this Country (Virginia I mean) follow so laudable and beneficial an example? and particularly why do not the gentlemen in the vicinity of Fredericksburg begin this Work? Your lands axe peculiarly well adapted for it. There are more of you, in a small circle than I believe is to be found in the same compass almost anywhere. And you are well able to afford experiments; from which and not from theory are individuals to derive useful knowledge, and the Public a benefit. My love, to which Mrs. Washington's is joined, is presented to Mrs. Spotswood and I am, &c.67

67. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PETERSON & TAYLOR

Mount Vernon, February 15, 1788.

Gentn: I have received your letter of the 13 inst. and am sorry to find that my bill of Scantling has not yet been forwarded to the Eastern Shore. I should have thought, notwithstanding the communication by water was stopped, that it might have been conveyed by land. I am now, in a manner reduced to the necessity of depending upon you for Scantling, because I have, in expectation of being supplied by you, employed my own Carpenters in other matters when they would have been preparing it.

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As the River is now open I should imagine that it might be delivered much sooner than you mention in your letter; if it should not, I shall sustain a great injury, to say nothing of the disappointment. I am, etc.⁶⁸

68. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM IRVINE

Mount Vernon, February 18, 1788.

Sir: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 27th. Ulto. and to thank you for the information contained in it. As a Communication between the waters of lake Erie and those of the Ohio is a matter, which promises great public utility, and as every step towards the investigation of it may be considered as promoting the general interest of our Country I need make [no] apology to *you* for any trouble, that I have given upon this subject.

I am fully sensible that no account can be sufficiently accurate to hazard any operations upon without an actual survey. My object in wishing a solution of the Quæries proposed to you, was that I might be enabled to return Answers, in some degree satisfactory, to several Gentlemen of distinction in foreign Countries who have applied to me for information on the subject in behalf of others who [wish] to engage in the fur trade, and at the same time to gratify my own curiosity and assist me in forming a judgment of the practicability of opening a communication should it ever be seriously in contemplation.

1st. Could a channel once be opened to convey the Fur, Peltry &c. from the lakes into the Eastern Country, its advantages would be so obvious as to induce an opinion that it would, in a short time, become the channel of conveyance for much the greatest part of the commodities brot. from thence.

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2d. The trade, which has been carried on between New York and that quarter is subject to great inconveniences from the length of the Commun. number of Portages, and at seasons from Ice; yet it has, notwithstanding, been prosecuted with success.

I shall feel myself much obliged by any further information that you may find time and inclination to communicate to me on this head. I am etc.69

69. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To JAMES WILKINSON**

Mount Vernon, February 20, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 30th. of December, 70 written at George-Town. I am very sorry that your business was so pressing as to deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you at this place, while you was in the neighbourhood of it.

Doctor Stuart handed me the Indian fabricks which you did me the honor to send by him, and for which I beg you to accept of my warmest thanks. Altho' they are not novel to me, yet the sight of them will undoubtedly be highly pleasing to those who have never before had an opportunity of seeing work of this kind; and peculiarly gratifying to the curiosity of an European. I regret the loss of the Seeds, having long been endeavouring to possess myself of the curious shrubs of the Western Country, but sincerely congratulate you on your own fortunate escape.

I feel myself much obliged, Sir by the offer of your Services which you are so polite as to make me, and shall always retain a grateful remembrance of them. My compliments if you please to Mrs. Wilkinson. With much esteem I am etc.

[CH.H.S.]

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70. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

***To SAMUEL GRIFFIN**

Mount Vernon, February 20, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have been duly honored and gratefully affected with the receipt of the Resolution of the Visitors and Governors of William and Mary College, appointing me Chancellor of the same; and have to thank you for your polite attention in the transmission. Not knowing particularly what duties, or whether any active Services are immediately expected from the person holding the Office of Chancellor; I have been greatly embarrassed in deciding upon the public answer proper to be given. It is for that reason I have chosen to explain in this private communication my situation and feelings; and to defer an ultimate decision until I shall have been favored with farther information on this subject.

My difficulties are briefly these. On the one hand, nothing in this world could be farther from my heart than a want of respect for the worthy Gentlemen in question; or a refusal of the appointment with which they have honored me, provided its duties are not incompatible with the mode of life to which I have entirely addicted myself. And on the other hand, I would not

for any consideration disappoint the just expectations of the Convocation; by accepting an Office, whose functions I previously knew (from my pre-engagements and occupations) I should be absolutely unable to perform.

Although, as I observed before, I know not specifically what these functions are, yet, Sir, I have conceived that a principal duty required of the Chancellor might be a regular and indispensable Visitation once or perhaps twice a year. Should this be expected, I must decline accepting the Office. For, notwithstanding I most sincerely and ardently wish to afford whatever little influence I may possess, in patronizing the cause of Science, I

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cannot, at my time of life and in my actual state of retirement, persuade myself to engage in new and extensive avocations.

Such being the *Sentiment* of a heart unaccustomed to disguise; I flatter myself the candid manner in which I have explained it, could not be displeasing to the Convocation; and that the intervening delay, between the *present* and the *moment* in which I shall have the pleasure of receiving such ulterior explanations as may enable me to give a *definitive answer* will not prove very detrimental to the Collegiate interests. With great esteem etc.⁷¹

71. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by George A. Ball, of Muncie, Ind. (See Washington's letter to Samuel Griffin, Apr. 30, 1788, *post.*)

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, February 22, 1788.

Dear Sir: If this letter should get to your hand in time, I beg you would send me five bushels of good clean and fresh red Clover and likewise of Timothy seed by the [first?] Vessel which you say would leave your Port for Alexandria after the Navigation would be open.

By a letter which I have just received from Mr. Smith of Carlisle dated the 5th. Inst. I am informed that he had at that time £200 of my money in his hands and would send it to you by the first safe conveyance. out of this please to pay yourself.

I will write more fully to you in a few days interim. I am etc.⁷³

73. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To EMBREE & SHOTWELL

Mount Vernon, February 22, 1788.

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Gentleman: I have received your letter of the 28th. Ultó. enclosing an Invoice of the Seeds shipped on board the Sloop Molly Beverly on my account which have since safety arrived.

The amount of your bill will be paid you by the House of Murray, Mountford & Bowen at New York.

The quality of the seeds cannot be determined till I have an opportunity of trying them, but let them turn out as they may, I dare say there has been nothing wanting on your part to procure those of the best quality for me. I am, etc.⁷²

72. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To REVEREND JOHN LATHROP⁷⁴

Mount Vernon, February 22, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 28th. Ultó. accompanied by the three pamphlets which you did me the honor to send me. You will do me the favor, Sir, to accept of my best thanks for the mark of polite attention in forwarding your discourses to me.

The one delivered before the Humane Society is upon a subject highly interesting to the feelings of every benevolent mind. The laudable view of Institutions of this nature do honor to humanity. The beneficence resulting from them is not confined to any particular class or nation; it extends its influence to the whole race of mankind and cannot be too much applauded. I am etc.⁷⁵

74. Of Boston, Mass.

75. In the writing of Tobias Lear. From a photostat of the original, through the kindness of Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N. J.